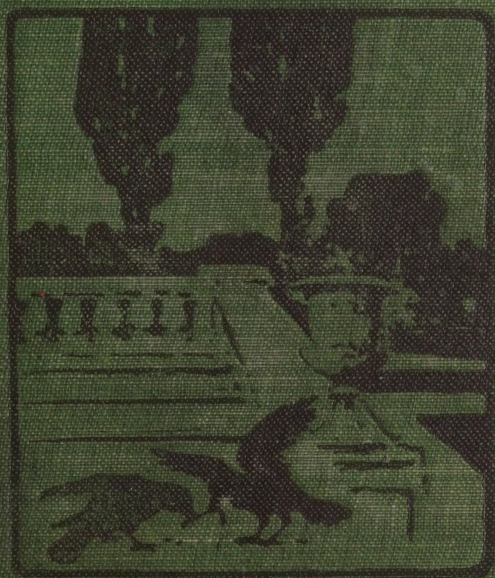


MY KALENDAR *of* COUNTRY DELIGHTS

BY HELEN MILMAN



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MY KALENDAR OF
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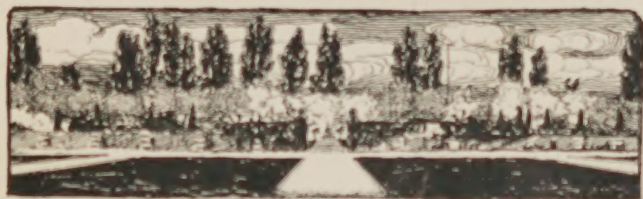
*"Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher."*



*"Awake, O north wind ; and come thou south ; blow
upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."*

THE SONG OF SONGS

MY·KALENDAR OF·COUNTRY·DELIGHTS



BY
HELEN·MILMAN
(M^{RS}·CALDWELL·CROFTON)

ILLUSTRATED BY
DONALD·MAXWELL.

JOHN LANE
THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON & NEW YORK

1903

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TO

GENERAL BRYAN MILMAN, C.B.

I DEDICATE THIS KALENDAR OF
MINE TO YOU BECAUSE EVER
SINCE I WAS A LITTLE CHILD
YOU HAVE BEEN MY FRIEND

PRELUDE .

Now that a great wish of my life has been fulfilled, and I can boast of a Garden Room of my own, a retreat where I can work, and scatter leaves, and thoughts, and flowers, at will, I have made up my mind to keep a Kalendar of my own, and write therein what comes to me with flowers, and song of birds, and treasures I find in books which fill shelves on the green walls. Old books, with musty covers, and time-worn pages. I like the words and expressions of "olden-day" writers. I like their preciseness, for I am seldom accurate myself. The flowers in those days are the flowers we love to-day, though the sweet old names are unknown to many. In winter-time visions of Spring and Summer are conjured at will by poets, and a study of old *Herbals* teaches us to study more. I had made up my mind to write a verse for my Prelude, but Parson Herrick says so perfectly in the Argument of his book what I fain would say in mine, that I quote him instead :—

*"I sing of Brooks, of Blossoms, Birds, and Bowers ;
Of April, May, of June, and July-Flowers.
I sing of May-Poles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes,
Of Bride-grooms, Brides, and of their Bridall-cakes.
I sing of Dervies, of Raines, and piece by piece
Of Balme, of Oyle, of Spice, and Amber-Greece.
I sing of Times trans-shifting ; and I write
How Roses first came Red, and Lillies White."*

I have appealed for quotations only to authors who have "crossed the bar." A few original poems have been given

me, poems that I value much, and here and there I have copied a verse that I love, hoping the authors will forgive me. All the writers of to-day are well known and well beloved, E.V.B., Canon Ellacombe, Elizabeth, Harry Roberts, and a host of others. Their books can be had for the asking, and folk require the whole, not jottings therefrom. For my Kalendar I have spent hours, days, weeks, in searching among books which are rare, and not easily read, so that to those who have not time, nor inclination to search for themselves, I may reveal hidden delights and buried joys. It is essentially a Nature Kalendar. I have only written of flowers and birds, with here and there a thought inspired by my garden. In my study I have learnt much ; it is a labour of love, and ungrudgingly I give it to the world. My notes on birds are culled from the note-book of one near at hand who knows far more about birds than I do, and who has taught me all I know.

In the blank spaces here and there I suggest that any lover of Nature may add for themselves their favourite flower, whether early or late, the first note of the cuckoo and chiff-chaff, the first swallow, or a verse they love ; noting also, if they will, the date of a visit to the country. So may my Kalendar become a delight to many.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

“Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south ;
blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof
may flow out.”—*The Song of Songs* . . . *Frontispiece*

Title-page

JANUARY	<i>To face page 2</i>
FEBRUARY	32
MARCH	60
APRIL	92
MAY	122
JUNE	152
JULY	182
AUGUST	214
SEPTEMBER	244
OCTOBER	274
NOVEMBER	306
DECEMBER	336



MY KALENDAR

OF COUNTRY DELIGHTS

JANUARY FIRST.—Another page turned. Another milestone reached on the King's Highway. Another year beginning with its hidden store of joy and sorrow. "I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity. I am in love with this green earth." Yes, I am in love with this green earth, too. I must note what I see and hear. Summer creeps into the heart in winter time if we read of flowers and birds. It is easy to shut one's eyes and see beautiful pictures, if we will that it should be so. Let Hope reign on New Year's Day. It is always possible "to begin again," always possible to do better. "The Aim, if reached or not, makes great the life."

*"Tall fir stems spreading upward to the green,
With golden bracken lying all below;
And here and there a tangled bramble seen,
Flecked with the white sheen of soft fallen snow.*

*A quiet stillness in the air around,
A solemn hush, as if the world stood still
In expectation ; waiting for the sound
Of the New Year to break on heath and hill.*

*And now from yonder hill the sun's bright beams
Shine through the mist, and flood the world with light;
The path winds on, leaving our broken dreams
Of tangled briar and brake far out of sight.*

*The dawn of hope has come our heart to cheer;
The path before us shines in the sun's ray.
We follow on, into the coming year,
And in hope's sunshine greet each op'ning day."*

—LILIAN PEARCE.

JANUARY SECOND.

“*Janiveer freeze the pot by the fire.*”—OLD PROVERB.

“Now have we naturally but few Flowers, except *Laurel-time*, and *Snow-drops*, but by the help of *Hot-beds* we may have some single *Anemonies*, Winter *Narcissus’s*, and *Narcissus’s* of *Constantinople*, *Crocuses*, &c., but we have now *Laruns*, *Rose-Leaves*, to garnish the Dishes we serve up to Table.” . . . So writes M. De la Quintinye in the *Compleat Gardener*, about 1649. We could note a nobler list nowadays, I trow ; for white lilac in pots, *Mal-maison* carnations, and bulbs bring sweetness and joy into the house. My basins are full of Roman hyacinths, and scillas push their way through their green buds above the moss.

Bacon writes : “I doe hold it, in the Royall ordering of *Gardens*, there ought to be *Gardens*, for all the *Moneths* in the *Yeare* : In which, severally Things of Beautie, may in then in Season. For *December*, and *January*, and the Latter Part of *November*, you must take such Things, as are Greene all Winter : Holly ; *Ivy* ; Bayes ; Juniper ; Cipresse Trees ; Eugh ; Pine-Apple-Trees ; Firre-Trees ; Rose-Mary ; Lavander ; Periwinkle, the White, the Purple, and the Blewe ; Germander ; Flagges ; Orenge Trees ; Lemin Trees ; And Mirtles ; if they be stooved ; and Sweet Marioram warme set.” How I love his Essay, “Of Gardens.”

“*A woman’s mind and winter’s wind change oft.*”



JANUARY

JANUARY THIRD.—No one in the country at this time of year can neglect to feed our friends the birds, who do so much to brighten with their song our spring and summer months. The most easily obtained food, and moreover the favourite food of all birds with hard bills, is hemp seed. It is very cheap to buy, and every village shop keeps it. Titmice and nuthatches can have the seed given them in a hanging box or small bucket, and a very pretty sight it is to see “Tom Titty-mouse” clinging to the string on which the bucket hangs, waiting his turn to slide down and pick out the much-loved dainty. The bills of these birds are too slender to allow of their cracking the seed in the same way as a canary or finch would do; so, perching on a twig hard by, they hold the seed in their feet, and hammer it with their bill until the husk is shivered; and if these birds are plentiful the air resounds with constant tappings as if numbers of fairy carpenters were at work. Nuts, too, whether broken into small pieces for the titmice, or uncracked for the nuthatches, are a very attractive food; and lumps of suet and bones are in great request.

Other birds, as the chaffinches, which feed on the ground, must have their seed scattered about; nor must we neglect the soft-billed birds—robins, blackbirds, and the like—for whom bread crumbs or bits of meat form a good and much-appreciated meal. Much amusement can be afforded by cutting off both ends of a cocoanut, placing it sideways on the ground and running a string through it, which, being pegged down at each end, prevents the nut from rolling away. Starlings and other birds will eat greedily of it.

Nor are our ordinary birds the only kind which will attend such a dinner as I have described. In severe cold, when snow covers the ground, many a strange visitor may be seen in our gardens, such as bramble-finches and hawfinches, and they being so rarely seen give us an opportunity of studying their habits, which is worth many a pound of hemp seed.

JANUARY FOURTH.—This is Rosemary Day in my Kalendar. "I would be large in commendation of this herb, were I but eloquent," writes Culpepper. An old proverb says "that, where the rosemary bush flourishes in the cottage garden 'the grey mare is the better horse.'" I suppose this holds good for other than cottage gardens. It was an old custom to stir a tankard with a sprig of rosemary. At weddings it was usual to dip a sprig in a cup and drink to the health of the new-married pair. It was borne in the hand at weddings. In 1607 these words came into a wedding sermon: "Let this *ros marinus*, this flower of man, ensign of your wisdom, love, and loyalty, be carried, not only in your hands, but in your heads and hearts."

In Lyle's *Herbal* (1578) is this description: "Rosemary is, as it were, a little tree or wooddish shrubbe, with many small branches and slender boughes, of hard and wooddie substance, covered and set full of little, smal, long, and tender leaves, white on the side next the ground, and greene above. The floures are whitishe, and mixte with a little blewe, the which past there cometh forth small seede. The roote and the stemme are likewise hard and wooddie. The leaves and the floures are of a very strong and pleasant flavour, and good smacke or taste. The oyle of the floures of Rose-mary helpeth the memory."

*"Now is winter and now is sorrow,
No roses but only thorns to-day:
Thorns will put on roses to-morrow,
Winter and sorrow scudding away.
No more winter and no more sorrow
To-morrow."*

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

JANUARY FIFTH.—In a very old book of *Sports and Pastimes* I find the following :—

“The King of the Bean’s reign commenced upon the vigil of the Epiphany. We read that some time back, it was a common Christmas gambol in both our universities, and continued at the commencement of the last century ‘to be usual in other places, to give the name of king or queen to that person whose extraordinary good luck it was to hit upon that part of a divided cake which was honoured above the others by having a bean in it.’ The reader will readily trace the vestige of this custom, though somewhat differently managed, and without the bean, in the present method of drawing, as it is called, for king and queen on Twelfth Day. I will not pretend to say in ancient times, for the title is by no means of recent date, that the election of this monarch, the King of the Bean, depended entirely on the decision of fortune : the words of an old kalendar belonging to the Romish Church seem to favour a contrary opinion : they are to this effect : On the Fifth of January, the vigil of the Epiphany, the Kings of the Bean are created ; and on the Sixth the feast of the Kings shall be held, and also of the Queen ; and let the banqueting be continued for many days. At court, in the eighth year of Edward III., this majestic title was conferred upon one of the king’s minstrels, as we find that sixty shillings were given by the king to Regan the trumpeter, the court minstrel, in the name of the King of the Bean.”

JANUARY SIXTH.—THE EPIPHANY—TWELFTH DAY.

I WOULD have you know that midwinter is now over, and the day has dawned for us to look forward to the glorious awakening of Spring, and no longer are we to dwell on the deadness of things. We pass to-day “that point in the earth’s orbit, where the North Pole is turned most from the sun.” A little more faith, a little more patience, and the sun will shine forth, so much the brighter for a touch of gloom. I must try not to moralise in my Kalendar! I follow the lines of one Agricola, Doctor in Philosophy at Ratisbonne. “I only write,” he says, “for those who take any Delight in *Gardens*, for their Diversion, that walking in a *Garden* with my Book in their Hand, it may furnish them with all manner of Thoughts. But I’ll never be at the trouble of proving what I say, my printed Works containing nothing but what has either Truth or Likelihood in it. I’ll never wilfully say or write anything that is unjustifiable, or against my Conscience: Neither do I design any harm to any Body, as being of no Advantage to me.” . . . I like the comfort of that sentence, “*I will never be at the trouble of proving what I say.*” It is such a delightful way out of every difficulty. I have studied the old Herbals, and am more than charmed thereby. “So may I call it that I have learned and gathered of manye good autoures not without great labourue and payne my booke.”

JANUARY SEVENTH.—Note this is St. Distaff's Day. Why is it so called? I will tell you. Or rather I will quote from William Hone so that I may make no error. "It is so called because it was celebrated in honour of the *rock*, which is a distaff held in the hand, from whence wool is spun by twirling a ball below. It seems that the burning of the flax and tow belonging to the women was the men's diversion in the evening of the first day of labour after the twelve days of Christmas, and that the women repaid the interruption to their industry by sluicing the mischief-makers." I am glad those days were not my days, though they were merry days, I ween.

ST. DISTAFFS DAY.

*"Partly worke and partly play
Ye must on St. Distaffs day :
From the Plough soone free your teame ;
Then come home and fother them.
If the Maides a-spinning goe,
Burne the flax, and fire the tow :
Bring in pailles of water then,
Let the Maides bewash the men,
Give S. Distaffe all the right,
Then bid Christmas sport goodnight ;
And next morrow, every one
To his owne vocation."*

—ROBERT HERRICK.

*"If the Janiweer calends be summerly gay,
'Twill be winterly weather 'till the calends of May."*

JANUARY EIGHTH.—In *Foster's Calendar* I read the quaint news that Quakers oftentimes named the months for themselves. The following is a happy example of my meaning :—

January	Snow Month.
February	Rain Month.
March	Wind Month.
April	Bud Month.
May	Flower Month.
June	Heat Month.
July	Hay Month.
August	Harvest Month.
September	Fruit Month.
October	Grape Month.
November	Fog Month.
December	Winter Month.

It would be almost impossible to remember these names, but they are fascinating, I admit. Here, in Surrey, September would have to be called Hop Month, and I would fain think of another name for Grape Month. Would Chestnut Month do? or can you give me a better one? I should like to make out a Bird Calendar, calling each month after the bird I see most frequently. Let each one make a Calendar for himself.

*“Who in Janiveer sows oats
Gets gold and groats ;
Who sows in May,
Gets little that way.”*

JANUARY NINTH.—I would have you know, Cynthia, that on this eve the farmer goeth forth (so I have been told, and I would not disbelieve it if I could), attended, doubtless, by all the men who laboureth for him, into the orchard. There encircleth they one of the full-bearing apple-trees, and three times three they give this toast :—

*“ Here’s to thee, old apple-tree,
Whence thou mayst bud, and whence thou mayst blow !
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow !
Hats full ! Caps full !
Bushel—bushel—sacks full !
And my pockets full too ! Huzza ! ”*

Cynthia, I crave in my heart to be present at such a merry-making, but the world is prudish, and I am bidden stay indoors.

If you would plant mistletoe in your garden, you must take a berry and rub it into a crevice in an old knarled apple-tree branch. Cover it perhaps with a little earth, and it will quickly grow. I know a garden where dark crimson eastern poppies blow, and there, in many apple-trees, are mistletoe boughs.

*“ The snow had begun in the gloaming,
And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
With a silence deep and white.*

*Every pine and fir and hemlock
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree
Was ridged inch deep with pearl.”*

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

JANUARY TENTH.—To-day I am filled with glee. A friend has lent me a very old book ; in fact, only a bit of a book, but one part is perfect, and on the title-page I read : “A Queen’s Delight : or, The Art of Preserving, Conserving, and Candying ; as also a right knowledge of making *Perfumes* and Distilling the most Excellent Waters.” *Never before Published.* Printed at the Angel in Cornhill. 1656.

What a lovely name—“A Queen’s Delight” ! Could Ruskin have toy’d with this book when he wrote “Of Queen’s Gardens” ? Was a woman a queen in her own home then as now ? “They also are called to a true queenly power,—not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere. . . . The path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers ; but they rise behind her steps, not before them. ‘Her feet have touched the meadows, and left the daisies rosy.’ ” Yes, Ruskin *understood*. He would have us greater, nobler, grander than we are. If every little trivial task in the home was “A Queen’s Delight,” then life itself would be ennobled, and we should “idealise our Real.”

I open the book at random.

“TO MAKE SYRUP OF GLOVE GILLYFLOWERS.

“Take a quart of water, half a bushel of Flowers, cut off the whites, and with a Sive sift away the seeds, bruise them a little ; let your water be boyled and a little cold again, then put in your Flowers and let them stand close covered twenty-four hours ; to that liquor put in three pound of Sugar, let it lye in all night, then glasse it.”

JANUARY ELEVENTH.—I have been making a collection of old Flower names. Names that Gerarde, and Parkinson, and all the old Herbalists refer to as “called by woman,” or “given by old wives,” or “called by the women of the country.” In fact the result of the genuine “mother-tongue.” I love the old names so. Here are a few :—

Blue Bells (wild Hyacinth) = Jacinth, Cuckoo-Boots.

Snowdrop = The Virgin Floure, Pearl Drops, Sommer Fooles.

Cowslip = Paige, Two-in-a-hose, Herbe Peter, Our Lady's Keys, Petty Mullein, Palsy Wort.

Daisy = Herbe Margaret, Eye of Day.

Daffodil = Primrose Pearlesse, Lent Rose, Kings Chalice, Crow-bell.

Lily of the Valley = May Lilly, Convall Lily, Liriconfancie, Lilly Constancy, Our Lady's Tears.

Poppy = Joan Silver-pin, Cheese-bowles, The Red Mantle of Ceres, Corn Rose, Faire-without-and-foule-within, Head-aches.

Corn-flower = Blewe Bottle, Blew Blow, Hurt Sickle.

Milk Wort = Crosse-flower, Procession Floure.

French Lavender = Cast-me-down, Stickadove.

Marvel of Peru = Four O'clock Flower, Princesses Leaf.

Pyracantha = Thorne-ever-greene, Prickley Corall.

Peony = Flower of Prosperity, Plant-of-Twenty-Days.

Star of Bethlehem = Eleven O'clock Lady.

Amaranthus = Love-lies-Bleeding, Floure Gentle, Floure Velure, Florimour, Velvet Flower.

Dock = Patience.

Another day I will give a longer list. My memory fails me for a moment, and my note-book is not at hand. I feel, suddenly, as if I had been transplanted three hundred years ago.

JANUARY TWELFTH. — The Fieldfares are winter visitors to us, and so do not breed in these islands. After nesting in Norway and the northern parts of Europe, they move southwards to escape the rigours of a Scandinavian winter, cross the North Sea and arrive here in October and November. From the date at which they arrive it can be foretold whether the winter be an early or late one. For some weeks after the fieldfares come they live in a land of peace and plenty, and may be seen in company with large flocks of redwings, from whom they are easily distinguished by their larger size and blue backs. After a while winter lays its iron grasp on the soil, and the poor fieldfares have to travel many miles to obtain food. They then resort to holly trees, where with missel-thrushes and hawfinches they feast on the gorgeous berries kind Dame Nature so liberally provides. Alas ! at such times they fall an easy prey to the boy-sportsman ; for fieldfares are good eating. Though fairly plentiful all over the country, they are not generally seen in large flocks, preferring to move about in families, it would seem, when their unmusical “clack, clack, clack” may be nearly always heard as they fly overhead.

“I have discovered an anecdote with respect to the fieldfare which I think is particular enough. This bird, though it sits on trees in the day-time, and procures the greatest part of its food from whitethorn hedges ; yea, moreover, builds in very high trees ; yet always appears with us to roost on the ground. They are seen to come in flocks just before it is dark, and to settle and nestle among the heath in our forest. And, besides, the larkers, in dragging their nets by night, frequently catch them in the wheat-stubble ; while the bat fowlers, who take many redwings in the hedges, never entangle any of this species. Why these birds, in the matter of roosting, should differ from all their congeners, and from themselves, also, with respect to their proceedings by day, is a fact for which I am in no way able to account.”—
GILBERT WHITE, 1770.

JANUARY THIRTEENTH.—Dear Veronica, this is your Saint's Day, but you, as you sit among your flowers, even in midwinter, with the sunshine round you, you do not one bit remind me of your namesake Saint Veronica who died in 1497. Her desire, forsooth, was to live ever on bread and water, and your longing is to live on love ! Which do you think satisfieth most ? I can hardly say. There are times on record when love leaves one sorely a-hungered, and again times when one little crumb is enough to keep the flame of life burning with a fierce glow. Keep thy lilies white in the Queen's Garden. As I wrote in the long ago :—

“Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, come to all of us. We bear fruit, some thirty, some forty, and a very few a hundred-fold. We need a deal of pruning, and those who are pruned hardest bear the best blossoms. We cannot do without sunshine—and we cannot grow without showers.”

*“ Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how ;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving ;
'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
'Tis the natural way of living :
Who knows whither the clouds have fled ?
In the unscarred heaven they have no wake ;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache.”*

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

JANUARY FOURTEENTH.—"By a garden is meant mystically a place of spiritual repose, still, peace, refreshment, delight," says Cardinal Newman. Modern authors agree with the old. "You have heard it said," writes Ruskin, "—and I believe there is more than fancy even in that saying, but let it pass for a fanciful one—that flowers only flourish rightly in the garden of some one who loves them. I know you would like that to be true; you would think it a pleasant magic if you could flush your flowers with brighter bloom by a kind look upon them; nay, more, if your look had the power, not only to cheer, but to guard; if you could bid the black blight turn away, and the knotted caterpillars spare; if you could bid the dew fall upon them in the drought, and say to the south wind in the frost, 'Come, thou south wind, and breathe upon my garden.'"

I find in my MS. book the following quotation, but I do not know who wrote it: "Among the links between man's mind and Nature we may place, as one of the most obvious, man's earliest attempt to select and grasp from her scattered varieties of form that which—at once a poem and a picture—forms, as it were, the decorated borderland between man's home and Nature's measureless domains."

What a marvellous link a garden is between man and Nature. A plane on which we all meet, and every one is in sympathy. The love of a garden purifies a man's mind.

JANUARY FIFTEENTH

*“Now sharp-nosed Janus, with his frozen face,
Congeales the most Aquarius into ice :
Eat, drink, and smoke, clothe well, and keep good Fires,
Crack jokes, and dance to Fiddles, Harps, and Lyres ;
Tell Tales of Ghosts, and let each jovial Bowl ;
Put by Care’s tenfold miseries to hereafter,
And with quaint Monus crack your sides with laughter.”*

“Larks now congregate and fly to the warm stubble for shelter, and the Nuthatch is heard. The Slug makes its appearance, and commences its depredations on garden plants and green wheat. The Missel-thrush begins its song. The Hedge-sparrow and the Thrush begin to sing. The Wren also ‘pipes her perennial lay,’ even among the flakes of snow. The Titmouse pulls straw out of the thatch in search of insects : Linnets congregate, and Rooks resort to their nest-trees. The Bat appears ; Spiders shoot out their webs ; and the Blackbird whistles. The Fieldfares, Red-wings, Skylarks, and Titlarks resort to watered meadows for food, and are, in part, supported by the gnats which are on the snow, near the water.”—DR. FOSTER’S “CALENDAR.”

It is curious to see how birds and animals understand each other’s alarm-notes. To-day I saw a squirrel on the lawn searching for chestnuts ; suddenly a jay screamed on the other side of the wall, and instantly the squirrel rushed off in alarm. Perhaps his conscience smote him, for after all he had only been pretending he was looking for chestnuts, all the time he had been really eating my best purple crocus bulbs !

JANUARY SIXTEENTH. — Listen, I pray, to this writing of Parkinson. The advice is good. “And because ignorance is the chief cause of neglect of many rare things, which happen to their view at sometimes, which are not to be seen again peradventure, or not in many yeares after, I would heartily advise all men of meanes, to be stirred up to bend their mindes, and spend a little more time and travell in these delights of herbes and flowers, than they have formerly done, which are not onely harmlesse, but pleasurable in their turn, and profitable in their use.”

“And by the icon or image of every herb, the ancients at first found out their virtues. Modern writers laugh at them for it; but I wonder in my heart how the virtue of herbs came at first to be known, if not by their signatures; the moderns have them from the writings of the ancients; the ancients had no writings to have them from.”—CULPEPPER.

Here are my sentiments in connection with my Kalendar expressed by Maund: “In this little work it is not the province of the author to wade deep in the current of science and research. He humbly collects all the sweets and the beauties that float on the surface, and of these he has pleasure in composing a nosegay, as a periodical present to the lovers of a flower-garden.”

JANUARY SEVENTEENTH.—I know not why, Perilla, but to-day my thoughts dwell on spiders. One has been running over my dress as I write, and though I like them not, I am superstitious about spiders and would not hurt them for the world.

“*Araignée du matin, chagrin.*

Araignée du midi, plaisir.

Araignée du soir, espoir.”

Yes, I know ; but there is no need to fear though it is morning, “All’s right in the world.”

I never knew till to-day that spiders are musical. “They are a very interesting tribe of insects,” says a writer early last century, “in spite of their ugly appearance, and the general dislike which most persons, especially females”—*especially females*, indeed !—“attach to them, is common with earwigs. Naturalists have found out this curious propensity in spiders, that they seem remarkably fond of music, and have been known to descend from ceilings during concerts, and to retire when the strain was finished, of which the following odd verses from the *Authologia Borealis et Australis* remind us :—

“*In this wild, groping, dark, and drearie cove,
Of wife, of children, and of health bereft,
I hailed thee, friendly spider, who hadst wove
Thy mazy net on yonder mouldering raft ;
Would that the cleanlie housemaid’s foot had left
Thee tarrying here, nor took thy life away ;
For thou from out this seare olde ceiling’s cleft
Came down each morn to hede my plaintive lay ;
Joying like me to heare sweete musick play,
Wherewith I’d fein beguile the dull dark lingering day.”*

JANUARY EIGHTEENTH.—"What the Nightingale is to the Ear, the Peacock is to the Eye. It must be granted that the Cock, the Wild-duck, and the Kingfisher, the Goldfinch, the Parrot, and the Pheasant, with a variety of other Birds, are very finely array'd, and we are delighted with the Consideration of their Ornaments, and the elegant Taste of their different vestures; but when the Peacock appears, every Eye is allured. The Air of his Head; the easy Turn of his Shape; the blended Colours of his Body; the Eyes and clouded Spots of his Tail; the Gold and Azure that shine in Every Part; the Round of Plumage he draws after him with so much pomp; his Aspect full of Dignity, and the very Attention with which he unfolds his Ornaments to the Spectators, whom Curiosity assembles around him, have a singular and ravishing Effect. This Bird alone is a noble Spectacle; but would you imagine he had any unpleasing deficiencies? However, this is the fatality of the Peacock; he dissatisfies all his Beholders; he can neither talk nor sing; his Language is shocking, 'tis a Cry capable of inspiring one with Horror; whereas the Linnet, the Linnnet, the Thistlefinch, and the Parrot, with all the modestest and most simple Accomplishments, live with us Fifteen years or more, without giving us a Moment's Disgust; they are Creatures of Understanding and good Behaviour, and that is saying everything to their Advantage. A pompous Exterior is a Qualification the least necessary to render Society agreeable and of a long Duration."—*Nature Display'd*, 3rd ed. 1736.

JANUARY NINETEENTH.—To-day I have spent with Ruskin. Whenever I want to be lifted above the everyday world into a higher plane, I study Ruskin, muse over Browning, or gaze at Watts's pictures. Then refreshed, I am ready for work again, ready to take a grander view of life. Take, for example, this passage: "Have you ever thought seriously of the meaning of that blessing given to the peacemakers? People are always expecting to get peace in heaven; but, you know, whatever peace they get there will be ready made. Whatever making of peace *they* can be blest for, must be on the earth here: not the taking of arms against, but the building of nests amidst, its 'sea of troubles.' Difficult enough, you think? Perhaps so; but I do not see that any of us try. We complain of the want of many things—we want votes, we want liberty, we want amusement, we want money. Which of us feels, or knows, that he wants peace? . . . None of us yet know; for none of us have yet been taught in early youth what fairy palaces we may build of beautiful thought—proof against all adversity. Bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble histories, faithful sayings, treasure-houses of precious and restful thoughts, which care cannot disturb, nor pain make gloomy, nor poverty take away from us—houses built without hands, for our souls to live in." How thoughts like these fill one with an intense longing to try and make life more perfect, more free from petty worries! Sometimes a passage like this will cure a fit of Accedie, sometimes only work will do so—Hard work, or work for others.

JANUARY TWENTIETH.—ST. AGNES' EVE.

*“ And on sweet St. Agnes' night,
Please you with the promised sight,
Some of husbands, some of lovers,
Which an empty dream discovers.”*

—BEN JONSON.

“Upon St. Agnes' night you take a row of pins, and pull out every one, one after another, saying a Pater-Noster, sticking a pin in your sleeve, and you will dream of him or her you shall marry.”

*“ Ah ! bitter chill it was !
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold.”*

For January, from Parkinson : “Christmas Flower, Winter Wolves have, Hepatica or noble Liver Wort, blew and red, and of shrubbes, the *Laurus Tinus*, or wild Bay Tree, and Mesereon or the dwarfe Bay : but because Januarie is oftentimes too deepe in frosts and snow, I therefore referre the Hepaticas unto the moneth following, which is February.”

“Thunder in January signifieth the same year great winds, plentifull of corn and cattle, peradventure.”

JANUARY TWENTY-FIRST.—"On St. Agnes' Day the lizard comes out of the hedge."

"The Spirits which compose the atmosphere of Perfumes, as you call it, must be extremely subtle and delicate, since the Day-Light alone is sufficient to disperse them thro' the Pores of some particular Flowers. I cultivate one, for Instance, call'd the Crane's Bill, with a Tuberous Root, which never dispenses the least Odour, while the Day continues, but is exquisitely fragrant in the Night. . . . The Spirits of Flowers are dissipated in proportion to the Sun's Action upon them. . . . We are easily sensible of the Intercourse that appears between the Flowers, the Air, and the Sun-Beams."—*Nature Display'd*.

"Fragrance on the whole seems less common in marsh and water plants. We find it rather in the Thymes, Lavenders, Roses, and Myrtles, and the tenants of a drier soil. Yet even in England we have the Scented Cane, the Yellow Water-lily, and Dog Myrtle, besides other offshoots from the drier orders, as Meadowsweet and the aquatic species of Mint."—FORBES WATSON.

"On St. Agnes' Day the cold comes through the chinks."—OLD ITALIAN PROVERB.

JANUARY TWENTY-SECOND.—This is St. Vincent's Day. In *Foster's Calendar* I read, "There is an ancient admonition to note down whether or no the Sun shine on St. Vincent's Day :—

*Remember on St. Vincent's Day
If that the Sun his Beams display.*

The particular origin of this command is unknown, but it may probably be from an idea that the Sun would not shine unominously on that day on which the martyrdom of the Saint was so inhumanly finished by burning."

*"So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not
To those fresh morning drops upon the Rose,
As thy eye-beams, when their fresh rays have smote
The night of dew that on my cheeks down flows :
Nor shines the silver moon one half so bright
Through the transparent bosom of the deep,
As doth thy face through tears of mine give light,
Than shinest in every tear that I do weep."*

—SHAKESPEARE.

*Baby hands catch at the sunbeams.
Teach us to catch them too !
Looking beyond the cloudlets
On, to the perfect blue.
Seeing the light which shineth
E'en in the darkest night,
Sunbeams over the pathway
Shedding a sweet love-light*

JANUARY TWENTY-THIRD.—"We have, in the winter, vast flocks of the common linnets ; more, I think, than can be bred in any one district. These, I observe, when the spring advances, assemble on some tree in the sunshine, and join all in a gentle sort of chirping, as if they were about to break up their winter quarters, and betake themselves to their proper summer homes. It is well known, at least, that the swallows and fieldfares do congregate with a gentle twittering before they make their respective departures."—GILBERT WHITE.

*"As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-sprung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the year :—be calm and mild,
Trembling hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.*

*January grey is here,
Like a sexton by her grave ;
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O, ye hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers."*

—SHELLEY.

"L'hiver nous fait plus de mal que l'été ne nous fait du bien."

JANUARY TWENTY-FOURTH.

WRIT ON ST. PAUL'S EVE, 1823.

*"Winter's white shroud doth cover all the ground,
 And Caecias blows his bitter blaste of woe ;
 The ponds, and pooles, and streams in ice are bounde,
 And famished birds are shivering in the snowe.
 Still round about the house they flitting goe,
 And at the windows seek for scraps of fooode
 Which Charity with hand profuse doth throwe,
 Right weeting that in need of it they stooode,
 For Charity is shown by working creature's goode.*

*The Sparrowe pert, the Chaffinche gay and cleane,
 The Redbreast welcome to the cotter's house,
 The livelie blue Tomtit, the Oxeye greene,
 The dingie Dunnock, and swart Colemouse ;
 The Titmouse of the marsh, the nimble Wrenne,
 The Bullfinch and the Goldspinck, with the king
 Of birds, the Gold-crest. The Thrush, now and then,
 The Blackbird, wont to whistle in the Spring,
 Like Christians seek the heavenlie fooode St. Paul doth bring."*

—From "FOSTER'S KALENDAR."

Here we have been hearing the gold-crest often, now and again the hedge-sparrow, and a pigeon has actually been coaxed into a coo by a sunbeam. After the missel-thrush, which I note is our January bird, of course the robin is heard above all others. Starlings have been singing, if you have courage to brave musicians and call his note a song, and they have been especially mimicking the cry of a sparrow-hawk, which provokes me. I care not to be made look foolish by a starling !

JANUARY TWENTY-FIFTH.

ST. PAUL'S DAY.

*"If St. Paul's day be fair and cleare,
It does betide a happy yeare ;
But if it chance it then should raine,
Then will make clear all kinds of graine ;
And if the clouds make dark the skie
Great store of birds and beasts shall die ;
And if the winds do fly aloft,
Then Mars shall vex the kingdome oft."*

—WILES FORD'S "NATURE SECRETS."

*"North winds send haile,
South winds bring raine,
East winds we bewail,
West winds blow amaine :
North East is too cold,
South East not too warme,
North West is too bold,
South West doth no harme."*

—Tusser.

*"The north is a noyer to grasse of all suites,
The east a destroyer to herbe and to fruites ;
The south with his showers refresheth the corne,
The west to all flowers may not be forborne."*

—Tusser.

"The Festival of the Conversion of St. Paul, whatever the reason of it may be, has always been reckoned particularly ominous with respect to the future weather of the year ; and, what is very curious, this notion prevails in many countries distant from each other."

JANUARY TWENTY-SIXTH.—I turn the pages of *Nature Display'd*, written early in 1700, and this touches me, for the conversation turns on flowers.

Countess.—"What advantage could we derive from the Sense of Light, were it unaccompanied with proper Sentiments?"

Prior.—"The Flowers, my dear Chevalier, which tender us such pleasing Services, disclose a Function still more noble and beneficial, by perpetuating the Plants, and embellishing the Face of Nature."

Chevalier.—"What can they possibly do more?"

Prior.—"They furnish us with Instruction, and conduct us by gentle Steps, to the Knowledge of the first Being, who has condescended to shape and paint them with so much Delicacy, and to grace them with such a Variety of Beauties. How amiable must he then be, who is the Source of so many charms in such an Infinity of Objects, to whom he constantly imparts the same Lustre they disclosed, when they first appeared on the Earth! And if he has been pleased to bestow so magnificent an Array, on Creatures of such a transient Duration, and, who to-morrow, will be wither'd and trodden under Foot, like the Herbage of the Field; What will he not do for us, who are the Objects of his Complacency? What Riches will he not shower upon us with Profusion, when he shall feel the Desires which he himself has created within us, and when his Omnipotence shall be Employed to embellish the Souls of Men?"

JANUARY TWENTY-SEVENTH.—"Dead Nettle, or Arch-angell. By hedges, walls, waies, borders of fields."

"To put a gloss upon their practice, the physicians call an herb (which country people vulgarly know by the name of dead nettle) archangel : whether they favour more of superstition or folly, I leave to the judicious reader. There is more curiosity than courtesy to my countrymen used by others in the explanation as well as of the names, as description of this so well known herb. They grow almost everywhere, *unless it be in the middle of the street* ; It makes the heart merry, drives away melancholy, quickens the spirit."
—CULPEPPER.

TO THE DEAD NETTLE.

*"Unlike the rose,
Thou hast not bards to sing
Thy merits as thy beauty grows
'Neath hedges in the spring.*

*Unconscious flower !
Thy downcast blossom seems
Like widowed thought in sorrow's hour
Away from pleasure's beams.*

*He that would learn
Sermons from thine eternal birth,
Might safely to the world return
And triumph over earth."*

—PRIOR.

JANUARY TWENTY-EIGHTH.

THE BRAMBLING.

PEOPLE who live in towns often say that the country is so dull in the winter time that they can find nothing to do there. He who observes birds has at least this advantage, that in the winter season he can occupy himself by looking out for those birds which only come to us at this time of the year. Amongst such are the Bramblings, or Bramblefinches. They often come in large flocks, and are particularly likely to be met with where beech trees abound, as they are devoted to beech mast, which at this season of the year is lying on the ground, waiting to be picked up by bird or squirrel. A Brambling at a distance is rather like a hen Chaffinch, but the general tone of colour is much warmer. The breast is of a chestnut colour, and the back a darker reddish brown, on which are several almost black markings, the shoulders in the sun appear almost red. When in flight the lower part of the back is seen to be white, like that of the Bullfinch but not so distinct.

They are not usually seen near houses unless the weather be so severe as to force them to come to the farm-yards in search of food which they are unable to obtain in the woods and fields. They often feed on our lawn when the snow is on the ground. As spring approaches they leave us for their breeding grounds in the more northern latitudes, apparently disliking even so little heat as may be experienced in an English summer.

JANUARY TWENTY-NINTH.—I have been thinking so much about the *expression* of flowers to-day, and wondering to myself whether a flower conveys the same expression to different people, or whether it is only our imagination and fancy which creates atmosphere round certain blossoms. I should like to keep a book with flower names in it, and ask my friends to write down their idea of the character of each.

I think a sweet-pea is a frivolous flower, and lives a butterfly life ; it wanders anywhere, and clings to anything, and has not any definite aim or ideal. With all its faults we love it passionately.

A snowdrop looks delicate and frail, but it speaks to me of dauntless courage. It has a story to tell ; and through storm, and rain, and wind it tells me that story ; it fulfils its mission ; it *does its best*. "Spring is coming," and so it blooms bravely.

Violets are all sweetness and modesty. They hide under green leaves ; they never push themselves to the front, but are always sweet and gentle, and consequently loved by all.

Some say tulips have no souls. They are brave, gaudy folk, a trifle opinionated and conceited ; but they bring the joy of colour into our gardens, and they open so graciously to the sun, and drink in the splendour of life.

I could thus write the character of almost every flower that grows, and should love to compare my ideas with other people's. I wonder if we should agree ?

JANUARY THIRTIETH.

*“Soothed by the genial warmth, the cawing rook
 Anticipates the spring, selects her mate,
 Haunts her tall nest trees, and with sedulous care
 Repairs her wicker eyrie—tempest tost.”*

—GILBERT WHITE.

WINTER.

*“The small wind whispers through the leafless hedge
 Most sharp and chill, where the light snowy flakes
 Rest on each twig and spike of wither’d sedge,
 Resembling scattered feathers ;—vainly breaks
 The pale split sunbeam through the frowning cloud,
 On Winter’s frowns below—from day to day,
 Unmelted still, he spreads his hoary shroud,
 In dithering pride on the pale traveller’s way,
 Who, croodling, hastens from the storm behind
 Fast gathering deep and black, again to find
 His cottage fire and corner’s sheltering bounds ;
 Where, haply, such uncomfortable days
 Make musical the wood-sap’s frizzling sounds,
 And hoarse loud bellows puffing up the blaze.”*

—CLARE.

Here is a pretty note on Rosemary by Parkinson :
 “This common Rosemary is so well known through all our
 Land, being in every woman’s garden, that it were suffi-
 cient to name it as an ornament among other sweete herbes
 and flowers in our garden, seeing every one can describe it :
 but that I may say something of it . . . in the naturall
 places where it groweth, that it riseth up in time unto
 a very great height, with a great and woody stemme that
 it hath served to make lutes, or such like instruments, and
 here with no Carpenter’s rules. . . . The whole plant, as
 well leaves as flowers, smelleth exceeding sweete.”

JANUARY THIRTY-FIRST.—Perilla didst then know that trees have souls? I knew it not until I came upon it in a very old book translated from the High Dutch. "There remains yet this more curious than useful Question to be resolv'd, Whether the Vegetable Soul, as a Creature that acts and suffers in this World, may not hope for a Recompense in another, and a Place among the *Trees* of the Celestial Paradise? To this I answer, Such as their Life is, such is their Death, such as their Death, such is their Resurrection; such as their Resurrection, such is their Heaven Life Eternal.

"Here I shall leave these merry Speculations and pass to something better, from which the Lovers of *Gardening* may draw more satisfaction and Profit."

Dr. Agricola hath a wondrous idea of "Merry Speculations" forsooth! We have thought often ourselves of meeting the animals again, Perilla, animals who have given the whole love of their lives to us, but trees—! I have never dreamt me of meeting trees again. "Merry Speculations" indeed!

William Turner (1568) writes in his *Herbal*: "For the knowledge of herbes, trees, and shrubbes is not onelye very delectable for a Princes minde but profitable for all the bodies of the Princes hole Realme both to preserve men from sickness, sorrowe, and payne that cometh thereby." There, my Princess, what thinkest thou of that? "And thus, to fit every one's fancy, I have shewed you the variety of Nature's store in some part for you to dispose of them to your best content."

FEBRUARY FIRST.—Phillis, this is Candlemas Eve, so haste thee to pull down the evergreens. Remember the old verse by Herrick :—

*“ Down with the Rosemary, and so
Down with the Baies, and misletoe :
Down with the Holly, Ivy, all,
Wherewith ye drest the Christmas Hall :
That so the superstitious find
No one least Branch there left behind :
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there (maids trust to me)
So many Goblins you shall see.”*

Would it trouble us to see goblins? I have always so longed to see them dancing round the fairy rings on my lawn, dodging the dew-drops, and pulling the blue-bells at dawn. But perchance these goblins are evil desires, and best left alone—goblins of jealousy and hate, and all such clouds which dim the blue. Phillis, all is sunshine with thee. Herrick again bids us down with evergreens, and goes on to say :—

*“ The Holly hitherto did sway ;
Let Box now domineere ;
Until the dancing Easter-Day,
Or Easter’s Eve appeare.
Then youthful Box which now doth grace,
Your houses to renew ;
Grown old, surrender must his place,
Unto the crisped Yew.
When Yew is out, then Birch comes in,
And many Flowers beside ;
Both of a fresh and fragrant kinne
To honour Whitsontide.
Green Rushes then, and sweetest Bents,
With cooler Oken boughs ;
Come in for comely ornaments.
Thus times do shift ; each thing his turn do’s hold ;
New things succeed as former things grow old.”*



FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY THIRD.

FOR FEBRUARY, FROM THE *Compleat Gard'ner*, 1649.

"Sow the seed of *Panacht*, or Striped *Gilli-flowers* upon *Hot-Beds*, before the full Moon, to replant them in May; Sow also the *Annual Flowers* upon *Hot-Beds* to replant at the latter end of *May*, viz., *Passe Velours*, or Velvet Flowers, called also *Flower Gentles*, and *Amaranthus*, *Indian Ocellus* or French *Mary-golds*, *Indian Roses*, the *Belles de Nuit*."

Bacon gives us for February: "The Mezerion tree which then blossoms; *Crocus Vernus*, both the Yellow and the Gray; Prime-Roses; *Anemones*; The early *Tulippa*; *Hiacynthus Orientalis*; *Chamairis*; and *Frettellaria*."

I love that word "Prime-Rose"; indeed all old flower names are my delight. Gerard tells us the primrose is generally called *Primula veris* "because they are first among those plants that doe floure in the Spring, or because they floure with the first. Also Pretty Mulleins or Palsie-worts." He mixes them up so hopelessly with Paigles that I get not a little confused.

*"Février entre tous les mois
Le plus court et moins courtois."*

FEBRUARY FOURTH.

*“February fill dike, be it black or be it white,
But if it be white, it’s the better to like.”*

Here is a very old verse which carries the same lesson :—

*“Now old Aquarius from his rainie urne
Pours out the streams and fills both Loch and Burne,
While Februa, with waterie load opprest,
Cracks the crimp ice on Winter’s frozen breast ;
Then seated on some sunnie Brae she strowes
About her feet the Snow-drop and Primrose.”*

Gerard, in his day, would not even allow that a snow-drop was a snowdrop. He calls it “Timely flouring bulbous Violet.” In English, “Sommer Fooles,” which I do declare is not at all a pretty name. Here is his description : “The first of these bulbous Violets riseth out of the Ground, with two small leaves flat and crested, of an overworne greene colour, betweene the which riseth up a small and tender stalke of two hands high ; at the top whereof commeth forth of a skinny hood a small white floure of the bignesse of a Violet, compact of six leaves, three bigger and three lesser, tipped at the points with a light greene ; the smaller are fashioned into the vulgar forme of an heart, and prettily edged about with green ; the other three leaves are longer, and sharpe pointed. The whole floure hangeth downe his head, by reason of the weake foot-stalke, whereon it Groweth. The root is small, white, and bulbous.”

“Touching the faculties of these bulbous Violets we have nothing to say, seeing that nothing is set downe by the ancient Writers, nor any thing observed by the moderne ; onely they are maintained and cherished in gardens for the beautie and rarenesse of the floures.”

FEBRUARY FIFTH.—Nowadays it is a common complaint that February is much colder than it used to be. Some say the seasons have changed; others that the almanac is wrong. Yet in 1814, for instance, the Thames was frozen over in February at London Bridge, and fairs were held upon the ice there, so we have not so much to complain of after all!

Birds suffer acutely by mild Januarys and cold Februarys such as we now have. The warmth of the early part of the year tempts certain numbers of robins and thrushes to make their nests, then, just as the young are being hatched, the severe cold of to-day comes, and the result is disastrous.

Where birds are well fed the hedge-sparrow and robin burst forth into song, in spite of twenty degrees of frost; but as a rule thrushes and other birds which had begun to sing become suddenly silent, as if angered by the sudden cold. A ruffled chaffinch may be seen hunting in the dead leaves for insect food, or wind-blown seeds, and Jenny Wren slips about amongst the frost-covered brambles in search of anything that will help to keep in life and keep out the cold. Wood pigeons greedily eat ivy berries, but they are generally to be seen in large flocks spread over the fields. In one field I saw a flock of some five hundred of these birds feeding on the tops of late turnips.

Even the snowdrops are bending their stalks, and the wall flowers resent the cold.

FEBRUARY SIXTH.—To-day is St. Dorothy's Day, and the old books are at variance as to which is her flower. Some say the blue jacinth, the lovely wild hyacinth of the woods, our blue-bell that we love so; and some say the forget-me-not.

*"The blue and bright-eyed floweret of the brook,
Hope's gentle germ, the sweet forget-me-not."*

In Parkinson and Gerard's days it was ever called Scorpion Grasse. "There is a sort in almost every shallow, gravelly, running streame, having leaves like to Brooklime. The floures grow at the top of tender, fat, greene stalkes, blew of colour, and sometimes with a spot of yellow among the blew; the whole branch of floures do turne themselves likewise round like the scorpions taile."

Dr. Batterson of New York sent me the following :—

FORGET-ME-NOT.

*"The Father gave all flowers a name,
And each one had its own;
But soon a wee one backward came,
And, standing by His Throne,
With timid grace and trembling frame,
The modest blue eyes fell;
And then it said, almost with shame,
'How it can be I cannot tell,
But, Father dear, my name! my name!
Alas! I have forgot!'
The Father kindly said, 'No blame,
My child,—FORGET-ME-NOT!'"*

The blue forget-me-not is sometimes called "Our Lady's Eyes"; and I think of the two flowers St. Dorothy would have given up the jacinth.

FEBRUARY SEVENTH.—In the *Spectator* of olden days I find Addison writing of gardens (1712): “You must know, sir, that I look upon the pleasure which we take in a garden as one of the most innocent delights in human life. A garden was the habitation of our first parents before the fall. It is naturally apt to fill the mind with calmness and tranquillity, and to lay all its turbulent passions at rest. It gives us a great insight into the contrivance and wisdom of Providence, and suggests innumerable subjects for meditation. I cannot but think the very complacency and satisfaction which a man takes in these works of Nature to be a laudable, if not a virtuous, habit of mind.”

“God Almighty first Planted a Garden. And indeed, it is the purest of Humane Pleasures. It is the Greatest Refreshment to the Spirits of Man ; Without which, *Buildings* and *Pallaces* are but Grosse Handy-works : And a Man shall ever see, that when Ages grow to Civility and Elegancie, men come to *Build Stately*, sooner than to *Garden Finely* : As if *Gardening* were the Greater Perfection.”—BACON.

“ *Lo, here hath been dawning
Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away ?
Out of Eternity
This new day is born ;
Into Eternity,
At night, will return.*”

—CARLYLE.

FEBRUARY EIGHTH.—While walking in the woods to-day I was struck by the little flower of the ground ivy, which made quite a mauve-blue carpet. The old names for this flower are “Ale-hoose,” “Gill-creep-by-the-Ground,” “Tun-Hoof,” and “Cat’s-foot.”

Gerard writes that “Ground-Ivy, Celandine, and Daisies, of each a like Quantitie, stamped and strained, and a little sugar and rose water put thereto, and dropped with a feather into the eies, taketh away all manner of smarting, or any grief whatsoever in the eies, yea although the sight were nigh hand gone : it is proved to be the best medicine in the world.”

Ground-Ivy is called Ale-hoof, and Tun-hoof, “because it was used in the making of beer before hops were much grown.” When the leaves are crushed a strong aromatic scent arises and gives pleasure for the moment.

*“ And there upon the sod below,
Ground Ivy’s purple blossom show,
Like helmet of Crusader Knight
Its author’s cross-like form of white.”*

—BISHOP MANT.

Did you ever hear tell that when woodpeckers tap the ash it ought to be cut down as it is a sign of decay? I know a woodpecker which *insisted* on boring and building in an old apple-tree, and, though stopt several times, began a fresh hole, and eventually raised a family of young yaffles. It remains now to be proved whether or no the splendid old bough will survive such rude treatment.

FEBRUARY NINTH.—The catkins are in the hedges. Lamb's Tails of my early days. I have been turning over the leaves of Evelyn's *Silva*, and he tells me "You may cut Withies, Sallows, and Willows at any mild and gentle season of the year, between leaf and leaf, even in winter; but the most congruous time both to plant and to cut them is about the new moon, and first open weather of the early spring." Then a little farther on he writes: "In order to raise a Salictum, or a plantation of willows for timber, the ground must be dug or plowed; and the cuttings for this purpose should be of the last year's shoot." "Salictum" is a pretty word.

Gerard tells us that "The greene boughs with the leaves (of the willow) may very well be brought into chambers and set about the beds of those that be sicke of Fevers, for they do mightily coole the heate of the aire, which thing is a wonderful refreshing to the sicke Patients. . . ." I think if I were ill I should like willow boughs brought into my room. They would conjure visions of cool streams and blue forget-me-nots, water meadows and the soft rush of water over the hills.

In the *Theory and Practice of Gardening*, 1712, I find: "The Sallow or Withy is very subject to weep and grow hollow, and so is of no long continuance; it is headed every three or four years."

If you bring willow boughs into a room and set them in water just as the buds are beginning to burst, they will soon be green and lovely.

FEBRUARY TENTH.—This is Snowdrop Day in my Kalendar. First I will give you Lyte's description of the flower (1578): "The Snowdrop beareth two or three narrow leaves, a short stemme, and upon it a little faire and pleasant flower growing foorth of a little long huske upon a smal stemme hanging downewards with three white leaves, amongst which there appeare three other little green leaves." Gerard writes (1597): "These plants doe growe wilde in Italie and in the places adjacent notwithstanding our London gardens have taken possession of them many years past."

The meaning of Snowdrop is "Hope," and it carries to our hearts the thought that bright days are coming, that in spite of cold, and storm, and darkness, and snow, the sun will shine again and all be lost in the Eternal Spring.

THE SNOWDROP.

*"Lone flower, hemmed in with snows, and white as they,
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquills, their odours lavishing
On the soft west wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!"*

—WORDSWORTH.

FEBRUARY ELEVENTH.—I have just been reading a book translated from the High Dutch, and therein I find what an intelligent gardener ought to know. I am just about to engage a caretaker for my own dear Garden of Peace, so it is as well to study good advice :—

“He must understand Water-works and have some knowledge of Sculpture ; to be perfect in Fencing, and Closing, and Ordering the Compartments of *Parterres* ; in *Grottoes* ; *Green Arbors*. He ought also to know how to make Galleries, and to assign the proper Places to *Pyramids*, *Obelisks*, and *Statues* ; and how to order cover'd *Alleys*, *Bowers*, and *Trellis* works. He ought also to know something of Architecture and Painting, and to make all sorts of Models of *Gardens*, *Green-Houses*, and *Glass-Cases*. He should also be a good Naturalist, and to know thoroughly how to order a *Flower-Garden*, and *Orchards* for *Fruit-Trees* ; and what he ought to plant in one or the other that so he may not place that in the *Kitchen-Garden* which should be in the *Flower-Garden* ; nor plant anything in the latter which ought to be in the orchard.” . . .

This is, I pray of you to believe, only the beginning of the Knowledge that a gardener ought to know ! My head begins to whirl. I shall never find an “olden-day” man in these parts ! Were they really like this two hundred and fifty years ago ? “Times is changed,” as the country people say ; and in many ways changed for the better !

FEBRUARY TWELFTH.

“ *When life was young, and days serene,
My heart enjoyed the rural scene.
The primrose pale, the violet blue,
Had something simple, fine, and new ;
And every bush and budding tree,
Conveyed a world of bliss to me.*” (1824.)

Aye, but it is the same now. All the early flowers convey a world of bliss to me. When I see the brave-hearted little scillus pushing their way up through the hard earth, and oftentimes through snow, my heart learns a lesson of courage. Nothing is so sweet to me as the first primrose. My whole life beginneth to feel young again. Even when the sand runneth out, and my eyes grow dim, each flower bringeth new life to me.

It is an old saying that “Spring is not here till you can set your foot on twelve daisies.” I never think Spring is really here till the swallows come.

“*Flowers have (all) exquisite Figures ; And the Flower-Numbers are (chiefly) Five, and Foure ; As in Prime-Roses, Brier-Roses, Single Musk-Roses, Single-Pinks, and Gilly-Flowers, &c., which have five Leaves : Lillies, Flower-de-Luces, Borage, Buglosse, &c., which have foure Leaves. But some put forth Leaves not Numbered ; But they are ever small Ones, as Mary-Golds, Trifoile, &c. Wee see also, that the Sockets, and Supporters of Flowers, are Figured, As in the Five Brethren of the Rose, Sockets of Gilly-Flowers, &c. Leaves also are all Figured ; Some Round, Some Long, Some Square ; And many jagged on the Sides ; which Leaves of Flowers seldom are.*”—BACON, *Sylva Sylvarum*.

FEBRUARY THIRTEENTH.

SIGNS OF FOUL WEATHER

*The hollow winds begin to blow,
The clouds look black, the glass is low ;
The soot falls down, the spaniels sleep,
And spiders from their cobwebs peep.
Last night the sun went pale to bed ;
The moon in halos hid her head.
The walls are damp, the ditches smell,
Clos'd is the pink-ey'd pimpernel.
Loud quack the ducks, the sea-fowl cry,
The distant hills are looking nigh.
How restless are the snorting swine !
The busy flies disturb the kine.
Low o'er the grass the swallow wings,
The cricket, too, how sharp he sings.
The smoke from chimneys right ascends,
Then, spreading, back to earth it bends.
The wind, unsteady, veers around,
Or settling in the south is found.
Through the clear stream the fishes rise,
And nimbly catch the incautious flies.
The glowworms num'rous, clear, and bright,
Illum'd the dewy hill last night.
At dusk the squalid toad was seen,
Like quadruped, stalk o'er the green.
The whirling wind the dust obeys,
And in the rapid eddy plays.
The sky is green, the air is still,
The mellow blackbird's voice is shrill.
Behold the rooks, how odd their flight,
They imitate the gliding kite,
And seem precipitate to fall,
As if they felt the piercing ball.
In fiery red the sun doth rise,
Then wades through clouds to mount the skies.
'Twill surely rain, we see't with sorrow,
No working in the fields to-morrow."*—DARWIN.

FEBRUARY FOURTEENTH.—This is the day all birds pair, for St. Valentine is the lover's Saint, to whom is dedicated the yellow crocus.

*“ On Valentine, the day when birds of kind
Their paramours with mutual chirpings find;
I early rose, just at the break of day,
Before the sun had chased the stars away;
A-field I went, and the first swain we see,
In spite of fortune shall our true-love be.”*

—GAY.

Here is a specimen of an ancient valentine writ at the very beginning of the last century.

*“ It is the hour of morning's prime,
The young day of the year,
The day of days before the time
When brighter hopes appear.
It is the time of early love
When suns but faintly shine;
It is the day, all days above,
The sweet St. Valentine.*

*The cold snows on the meadows lie,
And not a leaf is greene,
Yet here and there in yonder skie
A gleam of light is seen.
So love, young love, 'mid storms and snow,
Darts forth a light divine;
So darker days the brightness show
Of thine, St. Valentine.”*

St. Francis of Sales did not at all approve of the rites practised on this day. I wonder why not? Perchance it was because he had no sweetheart of his own.

FEBRUARY FIFTEENTH.

MEADOWSWEET COTTAGE.

MY DARLING OLD MONICA,—I have been up to the Hall and have searched the old bird book you ask me about. I would have searched more, but the long s's have made my head ache, and the spelling is so bad. It fills me with righteous horror to think our ancestors spelt so indifferently. I can't find anything about "Kingfishers"; they are evidently a modern invention. I found pages about the *Oftridge*. It puzzled me for hours; and I simply danced with delight when I discovered the silly old writer meant Ostrich. You will not care to hear why it 'swallows small Pieces of Metal called Iron,' but you may like the following: "Before we leave the Oftridge" (just as if it would have mattered leaving the bird pages ago), "who has had but an indifferent character from us" (I hate to hear of scandals even among birds), "let us relate all the advantageous Things we can say in her Favour. She furnishes us with most lovely Feathers" (what a surprise!), "very broad and long, some white, others black, but which are tinged by Art with all the Variety of Colours: They are placed" (now, all attention, Monica) "as Ornaments on the Testers of Beds, the Canopies of Great Men, and the Caps of Children: They adorn the Hats of Gentlemen and furnish the Ladies with very pretty Fans: they add Height to the Stature of Tragedians, and it must be confess'd the Theatrical Heroes would lose a considerable Part of their Grandeur, were they divested of the Oftridges Plumes."—Dear, dear, dear! No feathers for the ladies' hats! How selfish people were in those degenerate days! I mean to put feathers all round my bed, only I don't know what a tester is. Your old books, forsooth, are over-foolish I ween, or trow.—You see the old language has gotten into my head.—Your ever devoted CORNINA.

FEBRUARY SIXTEENTH.

*“Oh ! I wish I were a tiny, browny bird from out
the south,*

*Settled among the alder-holts, and twittering by
the stream ;*

*I would set my tiny tail down, and put up my
tiny mouth,*

*And sing my tiny life away in one melodious
dream.*

*I would sing about the blossoms, and the sunshine,
and the sky,*

*And the tiny wife I mean to have in such a
cosy nest ;*

*And if some one came and shot me dead, why,
then, I could but die,*

*But my tiny life and tiny song just ended at
their best.”*

—KINGSLEY.

FEBRUARY SEVENTEENTH.—In a poem of Michael Drayton's, written about the year 1590, he mentions many birds, and gives us the lesson we should learn from each. I have copied a few as they are full of interest. He would have us know that "The pretty Turtle, and the kissing Dove, convey to us the lesson of faith in wedlock.

"Hens . . . Sanctity.

Swallow . . . Cleanliness.

Heron . . . Shows tempestuous showers by soaring.

The Cock distinguishes the hours.

The Kite 'prescribes the helm, instructing how to steer.'

Crane, for labour. He burdens his claw with sand, which, being noted by man, they thus ballast their ships."

Then follows—

*"And by the form and order in his flight,
To march in war, and how to watch by night.
The first of house that ere did groundsel lay,
Which then was homely, of rude loam and clay,
Learn'd from the Marten : Philomel in spring,
Teaching by art her little ones to sing.
Covering with moss the dead's unclosed eye
The little Redbreast teacheth charity."*

Michael Drayton was poet laureate.

*"The groundflame of the crocus breaks the mould,
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the Southern sea,
Wavers as her stem the snowdrop cold
That trembles not to kisses of the bee."*

—TENNYSON.

FEBRUARY EIGHTEENTH.—I never knew until to-day that the moon influences different flowers. I found a passage in Lovell's *Herball*, 1659, and I set it down in my *Kalendar* because I like all manner of strange and marvellous knowledge.

“To the *Moon*, which is a Planet in a mean between good and bad: moderately cold and moist, a friend to Jupiter, Saturne, Venus, and Mercurie, and an enemy to the other two, and is correspondent to the brain, and therefore sympathetick with the nervous parts and animall spirits: as it is the generation of humidity, by which the whole universe is moistened; and is the fountain of peculiar influence, by which primarily and peculiarly it doth affect things familiar to it selfe, and, secundarily, things agreeing to Saturne, Jupiter, Venus, and Mercurie, as being benevolent unto the same: Under which are Adders tongue, cabbages, coleworts, columbines, water cresses, ducks meate, yellow waterflagge, flower-de-luce, fluellin, ivy, lettuce, water lilies, loose-stripe, with and without spiked heads, moonwort, mouseare, orpine, poppies, purstain, privet, rattle grasse, white roses, white saxifrage, burnet saxifrage, wall flowers, or winter gillowflowers, and willow tree: as also chast-tree winter cherries, garlick, reeds, brooklime, onions, cammomile, frog stooles, hyssop, mastick tree, nutmegs, wall nuts, line tree, water plantain, turneps, house leek, and common leeks.”

I wonder why this should be so? and why the moon should affect these plants, and these only.

FEBRUARY NINETEENTH.—This is the day the Romans of old dedicated to Tacita, the Goddess of Silence. We have given up keeping her day now ! Is it because the Goddess of Silence no longer reigns ? Perhaps so. Tacita is seldom found among the women of this century.

*“ The brightest hour of unborn Spring
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the balcyon morn
To hoar February born ;
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
It kiss’d the forehead of the earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all the fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strew’d flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one, on whom thou smilest, dear.”*

—SHELLEY.

“ When gnats dance in February, the husbandman becomes a beggar.”

*“ All the months of the year
Curse a fair Februeer.”*

“ February makes a bridge and March breaks it.”

*“ In February if thou hearest thunder,
Thou wilt see a summer’s wonder.”*

FEBRUARY TWENTIETH.

ON THE THROSTLE.

*" Varied are his plumes ; and as his plumes
Blend beauteous, each with each, so run his notes
Smoothly, with many a happy rise and fall,
How prettily, upon his parded breast,
The vividly contrasted tints unite
To please the admiring eye, loud and soft,
And high and low, all in his notes combine,
In alternation sweet, to charm the ear,
Full earlier than the Blackbird he begins
His vernal strain. Regardless of the frown
Which Winter casts upon the vernal day,
Though snowy flakes melt in the primrose cup,
He, warbling on, awaits the sunny beam
That mild gleams down, and spreads o'er all the grove."*

—GRAHAME.

THE SNOWDROP.

*" Many, many welcomes
February, fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes
February, fair-maid."*

—TENNYSON.

"The nights of this part of February are called in Sweden 'Steel Nights,' on account of their cutting severity."

FEBRUARY TWENTY-FIRST.—There are squirrels seeking for forgotten chestnuts among the dead leaves under the laurels. I do not believe there is one left !

*“ Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm
That age or injury has hollowed deep,
Where on his bed of wool and matted leaves
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play.
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighb’ring beech ; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.”*

—COWPER.

A squirrel has been up to our window after the bird’s hemp seed. He opens the lid of the tin and pops in and has a rare feast. If he hears us at the window, he lifts the lid just a little bit and peeps out. Recognising us, he goes on with his food with confidence, knowing well we will not disturb him. At the same time I do not wholly approve of him, for he eats my bulbs by way of dessert ; but it is difficult to scold him with any spirit, for he is such a merry little fellow. He enjoys the nuts we put out for the nut-hatches, and is altogether provoking. The prettiest sight I know is to see a squirrel standing up nibbling one of the great red funguses which grow in our woods in autumn. It would make a picture worthy of any artist to paint.

FEBRUARY TWENTY-SECOND. — St. Margaret's Day, and of course the Daisy or Herb Marguerite is her flower. The French name for Daisy is "Pâquerette," and the Welsh call it "trembling star." We have all felt the charm, in the "merry merry days when we were young," of plucking the petals, whispering the while with beating heart the old refrain: "Il m'aime un peu, beaucoup, passionnément, pas de tout." Chaucer likened a perfect woman to a daisy, with heart of gold and crown of innocence. Here are his lines:—

*"As she that is of all flouris the floure,
Fullfilled of all virtue and honoure;
And ever alike fair and fresh of hewe,
As well in winter as in summer newe,
As soon as ever the Sunne ginneth west
To sene this floure, how it will goe to rest,
For fear of night so hateth she darknesse
Her chere is plainly spread in the brightnesse
Of the Sunne, for there it will uncloze.
Well by reason men it calle maie
The Däisie, or elsi the Eye of the Daie."*

We know that a lady sang a "Bargonet" in praise of the Daisy, "Si donce est la Margarete," and Dryden tells us a Lady of his sang a "Virelay," saying, "The Daisy is so sweet." Dear "pearl flower," we love the chains made of your tiny blooms, and we watch you shut your petals as night draws her curtain over the world or raindrops fall. Truly the daisy is a flower of light and happiness. Ruskin writes: "It (the daisy) is infinitely dear as the bringer of light, ruby, white, and gold, the three colours of the day, with no hue of shade in it."

FEBRUARY TWENTY-THIRD.—My trees are doing well in the field. I watch them daily with loving care, and hoe them well. Nothing makes young trees grow like hoeing. Always after a shower we stir the earth well. My aspen tree already stirs its leaves. *Populus tremula* is such a pretty name, "Which word is borrowed from the French men, who name it *Tremble*. It also received a name amongst the low-Country men from the noise and rattling of the leaves, viz. Rateeler : and may also be called Tremble, considering it is the matter whereof women's tongues were made (as the Poets and some others report), which seldome cease wagging." So writes Gerard ; but I will never believe poets were so rude as he states.

Of the Elder tree "I hold it needless to write any description of this, since every boy that plays with a pop-gun will not mistake another tree instead of the elder," writes Culpepper.

"The Chestnut Tree groweth very tall and high, bearing great, long, rough, and wrinkled *Leaves*, dented about the edges, putting forth at the time of the year divers long Catkins or bloomings, somewhat like the oak but of a more greenish-yellow colour ; the Fruit groweth between the leaves and the branches towards the end of them, enclosed in three severall Huskes, the outermost whereof is whitish and prickly like an Urchin, which openeth it selfe when it is ripe, and sheweth the Nut." This is W. Cole's description of a Spanish chestnut (1657).

FEBRUARY TWENTY-FOURTH.—"And because, the *Breath* of Flowers, is farre Sweeter in the Aire (where it comes and Goes, like the Warbling of Musick) then in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight, then to know, what be the *Flowers*, and *Plants*, that doe best perfume the Aire. Roses, Damask and Red, are fast Flowers of their Smels; So that you may walke by a whole Row of them and finde Nothing of their Sweetnesse; Yea though it, in a Morning's Dew. Bayes like wise yeeld no Smell, as they grow. Rosemary little; nor Sweet-Marioram. That, which above all Others, yeelds the *Sweetest Smell* in the *Aire*, is the Violet; Specially the White-double-Violet, which comes twice a Yeare; About the middle of *Aprill*, and about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that is the Muske-Rose. Then the Strawberry-Leaves dying, which (yeeld) a most Excellent Cordiall Smell. Then Sweet Briar. Then Wall-Flowers, which are very Delightfull, to be set under a Parler or Lower Chamber Window. Then Pincks, and Gilly Flowers, specially the Matted Pinck, and Close Gilly-Flower. Then the flowers of the Lime tree. Then the Honey-Suckles, so they be somewhat a farre off. Of Beane Flowers I speake not, because they are Field Flowers. But those which *Perfume* the Aire most delightfully, not *passed by* as the rest, but being *Troden upon* and *Crushed*, are Three: That is Barnet, Wilde-Time, and Water-Mints. Therefore you are to set whole Allies of them, to have the Pleasure, when you walke or tread."—Bacon's Essay "Of Gardens."

FEBRUARY TWENTY-FIFTH.

*" Ah ! love, you have such a February face
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness."*

Forget not that the blue sky is behind the clouds. That the year is turned and spring will soon be here. Why, the snowdrops and crocuses are brave enough to face the storm, and why not you? You, with the strength of God within you. Soon will come the time when

*" The skies, the clouds, the fields,
The happy violets hiding from the roads,
The primroses run down to, carrying gold ;
The tangled hedgerows, where the cows push out
Impatient horns and tolerant churning mouths
'Twixt dripping ash-boughs—hedgerows all alive,
With birds and gnats and large white butterflies,
Which look as if the May-flower had caught life
And palpitated forth upon the wind."*

Messages come to us on the shaft of a sunbeam—messages of love ; and, after all, I would have you remember we cannot have a rainbow without a storm. Light would not be light unless compared with darkness. Our aim should be to keep the sun shining in our hearts, and in our faces, through the falling of the leaves, and the bitter cold and desolation of winter, and the waiting of spring, then storm and cloudiness will not make a burden of the day. Let not your heart be weary, if the day be long ; rest will be more perfect, and there is still so much we can do.

*" What time the Sun by his all-quick'ning power
Gives life and birth to every plant and flower,
The strength and fervour of whose pregnant ray
Buds every branch, and blossoms every spray."*

FEBRUARY TWENTY-SIXTH.

*“ Ah, too true ! Time’s current strong
Leaves us fixt to nothing long.
Yet, if little stays with man,
Ah, retain we all we can !
If the clear impression dies,
Ah ! the dim remembrance prize !
Ere the parting hours go by,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory.”*

I wish we wrote down our *impressions* more than we do. To see the waves of thought we have passed through, to note the moods of years gone by. Perhaps it is best to go straight forward, and not to waste time on the long ago. There is work to be done, by word and deed, and we have no excuse for sitting idle.

*“ There never yet was flower fair in vain,
Let classic poet rhyme it as he will ;
The seasons toil that it may blow again,
And summer’s heart doth feel its every ill ;
Nor is a true soul ever born for naught ;
Wherever any such hath lived and died,
There hath been something for true freedom wrought,
Some bulwark levelled on the evil side !
Toil on, then, Greatness ! thou art in the right,
However narrow souls may call thee wrong ;
Be as thou wouldst be in thine own clear sight,
And so thou shalt be in the world’s ere long ;
For worldlings cannot, struggle as they may,
From man’s great soul one great thought hide away ! ”*

I add the prophet-painter’s motto :—

“ The utmost for the highest.”

FEBRUARY TWENTY-SEVENTH.—I have been reading of the dear old herbs, and long to plant more in my garden. Take Basil, for instance. "Most people stroak Garden Basil, which leaves a grateful smell in the hand, and some will have it that stroaking from a fair ladie preserves the life of the Basil" (Tusser). And another writer: "Because the smel thereof is so excellent, that it is fit for a King's house." Gerard, writing of sweet Marjerome, says: "They are to be watered in the middle of the day, when the Sun shineth hottest, even as Basill should be, and not in the evening and morning, as most plants are." Culpepper gives another description of Sweet Basil: "This is a herb which all authors are together by the ears about, and rail at one another like lawyers. Chrysipus rails at it with downright Billingsgate rhetoric; Pliny and the Arabian physicians defend it. And away to Dr. Reason went I, who told me it was a herb of Mars, and under the Scorpion, and therefore called basillicon, and it is no marvel if it carry a kind of virulent quality with it. Being applied to the place bitten by venomous beasts, or stung by a wasp or hornet, it speedily draws the poison to it. *Every like draws its like.* . . . I dare write no more of it." This is verily a delightful description, and carries a lesson with it. There is much, indeed, to learn from the old herbalists.

"Every like draws its like."

FEBRUARY TWENTY-EIGHTH.—This is crocus day in my heart.

*"See yonder, where the snows have left the sod,
Already crocus rears her sun-dipped head,
A flower of hope, a very smile of God."*

They point a golden finger heavenwards, and the sunbeams meet the gold. Forbes Watson describes the colour so well : "To assert that the crocus is not golden, but saffron, is hypercritical ; and, moreover, scarcely true. It is saffron in a dull light, and in a light still duller it may be almost brown. But what is it when placed in the unclouded sunshine, the only time when the flower is fairly describable as a *cup* ? What can we say positively about the colour then ? The petals are orange here and yellow there, and everywhere display that shifting glance which we have already described as only comparable to brightest gold, together with a restless glow which, as the sunbeams stir it, seems absolutely to leave the walls, and roll like a fiery atmosphere within. Is not gold the comparison best suited to embrace all this, and most poetical, because most strictly true ?"

The crocus was introduced into England about the time of Elizabeth. Gerard writes of it : "That pleasant plant that bringeth forth yellow flowers, was sent unto me from Robinus of Paris." — "Truly this lovely little flower, 'bursting in a sunny hour from its winter tomb,' is a neat and beautiful emblem of the glad hope of the life everlasting."

MARCH FIRST.—St. David's Day, and a leek ! I cannot, I say, write of a leek in a poetical vein. I have discovered an old distich respecting St. David which runs thus :—

*"Taffy was born on a moonshiney night,
With his head in a pond and his heels upright" ;*

and this but fits in with my humour. In the British Museum there is an ancient MS., part of which I note here :—

*"I like the Leeke above all herbes and flowers,
When first we wore the same the field was ours.
The Leeke is White and Greene, whereby is ment
That Britaines are both stout and eminent ;
Next to the Lion and the Unicorn,
The Leeke the fairest emblym that is worne.*

*For Cambria, 'tis said, Tradition's Tale
Recounting, tells how famed Menevia's Priest
Marshall'd his Britons, and the Saxon host
Discomfited, how the Green Leeke the bands
Distinguished, since by Britons annual worne,
Commemorates their tutelary Saint."*

In an old *Herbal* I find that "All Leekes are sharpe, and move teares by the smell" ; and Gerard tells us that the juice of Leekes mixed with almonds and sugar candy and soure figs, is "very effectuall against Squinancies" ; otherwise it causeth "troublesome and terrible dreames." I do not think I have ever had the "Squinancies," but it must be a strange complaint.



MARCH

MARCH SECOND.—The flowers for March I cull from pages before me. “As to Flowers, if the cold be not extraordinary violent, we have Everywhere, and that naturally, all those sorts which blow only in good Expositions in the preceding months, besides which, we have *Violets*, *Jacinths*, *Passe-touts*, and single *Anemonies*, *Flower-de-Luces* and *Junquils*?”

In all gentleness let me remind you that a *Jacinth* is a blue-bell, a *Passe-touts* is a Pasque-flower, or *Herbe Trinitie*, or *Winde-Floure*, otherwise *Anemone*. *Flower-de-Luce*, you know, of course, is an *Iris*. The passage I have quoted is from the *Compleat Gard’ner*, 1649.

Now I turn me to *Bacon*. “For *March*, There come *Violets*, specially the *Single Blew*, which are the earliest; The *Yellow Daffadill*; The *Dazie*; The *Almond-Tree* in Blossome; The *Peach-Tree* in Blossome; The *Cornelian-Tree* in Blossome; *Sweet Briar*.”

To-day I should add wall-flower, the stock-gilly flower of olden days. Gerard calls it “wall-gillofloure, yellow stocke-gillofloure, and winter-gillofloure.” It is ever sweet, and shines like burnished copper in the sun. *Periwinkle*, too, opens its blue flowers this month in my rockery, the *Pervinkle* of long ago. “They grow in most of our London gardens; they love moist and shadowie places; the branches remain alwaies green.” The description to-day of this flower is, you see, the same nearly four hundred years ago.

MARCH THIRD.

ON GROUND FOR SOWING.

"Nor with too hasty Care presume to sow,
 E'er yet the Nature of the Soil you know,
 A Soil where Moisture rules your Flow'rs demand,
 Endow their Beauties with the richest Land:
 Shun lean white Clay where painted Lizards lye,
 Or Stony Ground, or Earth with Chalk too dry:
 And test the Turf e'en with a ruddy Soil,
 With barren Clods should mock the Gard'ners Toil,
 Search deep the Mould, nor the green Turf believe,
 Oft with the Surface of a Soil deceive.
 Rough Gravel may a verdant Coat display,
 And Grass may live upon a burning Clay;
 The Coarcer Moulds experienc'd Artists sift,
 Through wire-wrought Sieves till not a Pebble's left,
 Which rudely might the tender Blossoms wound,
 Or notch it' imprison'd Blade in Fetters bound.
 When both your Heav'n and Earth are close with Care,
 [A kindly Soil depends on kindly Air].

Two rules in sowing with your Art unfold,
 What face of Heav'n to choose, what depths of mould."

—RAPIN, 1673.

I wonder what Rapin would have said to the soil in my wild garden. Nothing but sand and stones! Yet as you look now from my window the surface of the land is clothed with broom and gorse, sweet briar, "maids of the village," honeysuckle, and here and there a patch of heather. Wherever blackberries will grow you may safely plant briar roses. I have scattered poppy seed broadcast and long for the summer to come.

MARCH FOURTH.—What shall I write in my Kalendar for my own birthday? I must dip into my favourite books to find thoughts that I love. When I ask for a verse for to-day these lines of dear old George Herbert's are always sent me :—

*“ Be useful where thou livest that they may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
Kindness, good parts, great places, are the way
To compass this. Find out men's wants and will
And meet them there. All worldly joys go less
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.”*

To be useful! Is that enough? “Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long.” Yes, I know; and I know, too, that there is no joy in life so great as doing little kindnesses.

“’Tis not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!”

There are a few lines in E. B. Browning's poems which I think describe a perfect woman. Oh, that we could live up to such an ideal!

*“ She never found fault with you, never implied
Your Wrong by her Right; and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer,
None knelt at her feet, confessed lovers in thrall,—
They knelt more to God than they used—that was all!”*

MARCH FIFTH.

*“ Out of her gold locks
Shaking the spring flowers,
Out of her garments
Shaking the south wind,
Around in the birches
Awaking the throstles.”*

Yes, that is what spring is doing, bless her ! The snow-drops are white in the wood, and we have had warm weather. March comes in this year like a lamb indeed. Will he be cruel and go out like a lion and spoil all my flowers ?

*“ So many mists as in March you see,
So many frosts in May will be.”*

I do not fancy old proverbs ; they always say something disagreeable. I heard the scream of the greenfinch for the first time yesterday, which fills me with joy, a herald of hot summer days. Swans have been flying over the garden, moving from pond to pond, I suppose, in search of fresh weed. On the lawn starlings have been very busy. They dig their beaks into the turf, and then dance round and round, using their bills as we would a gimlet, making quite a big hole. I wonder what they are in search of ? They have cleaned out their nest-box in the beech tree already, so have begun early. The throstles are singing splendidly, but blackbirds have only just begun to sing in warm evenings. I do not think they sing much till the end of March or beginning of April in the day-time. I hear the dear kingfishers have been looking at their hole in the sand rock over our wishing-well. I am so glad.

MARCH SIXTH.—Here is advice to a countryman in March, written at the beginning of the nineteenth century :—

*“ Now when a few dry days have made the land
For working fit, take then the Plough in hand ;
And if the weather should continue fair,
Keep on with sowing Oats, and Barley there ;
Nor this thy work defer, like some, until
The Showers of April gin the Diks to fill ;
A bushel of March Dust is worth, they say,
A Sovereign’s ransome or a Stack of Hay.
Now sow your garden seeds, now nail the Trees,
When the warm Sun at first brings out the Bees ;
For they by instinct strange, appear to see
What sort of weather is about to bee ;
Trust them, and imitate their industrie.”*

ON THE SOWING OF BARLEY.

*“ Sow Barley in March, in April, and May,
The later in sand, and the sooner in clay.
What worser for Barley, than wetness and cold ?
What better to skillful, than time to be bold ?*

*Who soweth his Barley too soon, or in Rain,
Of Oats and of Thistles shall after complain.
I speak not of May weed, of Cockle and such,
That noieth the Barley so often and much.*

*Let Barley be harrowed finely as dust,
Then workmanly trench it, and fence it ye must,
This season well plied, set sowing on end,
And praise and pray God, a good harvest to send.”*

—FROM TUSSEY’S WORK ON HUSBANDRY, 1573.

MARCH SEVENTH.—"When I was tir'd with running about the Town, I sometimes sought a Retreat in my Garden, where I found my Repose in many Experiments: but I often changed my Tast. My first Passion was for *bulbous Roots* and *Flowers*, of which I bought a great quantity in Holland; but having satisfied my Curiosity, and finding they are too apt to degenerate, I gave them over. Then I sent for all manner of *foreign* and *rare Seeds* from Paris: They were indeed Rarities; but after they had served me as an Amusement for some Years, I laid them aside too. My next Fancy was for *Carnations*; and I neglected nothing to have them of all sorts, as well *Picotées* as *Bezarts*; and this Humour continu'd with me for some Years: But at length I grew weary of them too, considering they gave only a slight pleasure to the Eye and the Smell; and sought for some more solid Delight—Thus I chang'd my Inclination, and my *Flower-Garden* immediately became an Orchard."

Thus wrote Dr. Agricola in his *Treatise of Husbandry and Gardening*. He must have been a sorry gardener, always changing his beautiful plants, and I have no respect for him, as he changed his flower-garden immediately into an orchard! I wonder he gave up Carnations, "Soppes-in-Wine," "Julian," "Jove's Flower," "Gilly-flower," "Granpere," as they used to be called. Carnations were also called "Tuggies," after Mistress Tuggie of Westminster, who had a wonderful collection of them in Gerard's time. "The conserve made of the flowers of the Clove Gillo-floure and sugar, is exceeding cordiall, and wonderfully above measure doth comfort the heart."

MARCH EIGHTH.—To-day I feel in a mood for Wordsworth. It is not always I feel so. I long generally for the strong teaching of Browning. "All's right with the world." But after musing on flowers and birds, the Lake poet comes very near in spirit, and I feel he will *understand*. How few understand really! and tempt one to lift the curtain which hides all the true working of the spirit within. Here are some lines writ by Wordsworth in March :—

*"The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun ;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest ;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising ;
There are forty feeding like one !*

*Like an army defeated
The Snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill ;
The Plough-boy is whooping—anon—anon :
There's joy in the mountains ;
There's life in the fountains ;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing ;
The rain is over and gone——"*

MARCH NINTH.

*“ In the first mild day of March ;
Each minute sweeter than before,
The Redbreast sings from the tall Larch
That stands before our door.*

*There is a blessing in the air,
There seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.”*

—WORDSWORTH.

This is our first mild day, and I can so well realise the wonderful “blessing in the air.” “A peck of March dust is worth a king’s ransom,” they say, and this year March has been very kind to us. Up the lane the gorse, which had been cut and hurt by February frost, has now again donned its golden drapery, and at the corner the yellow-hammer, the guardian of that spot, sings out his familiar song. A shade of purple tints the wood, and the elms are in crimson bloom. Then is the time to clip ivy, so ours is done at once. In the wood snowdrops are still in full bloom, and on the rockery blue, pink, and white hepaticas are in flower, and bees already begin to buzz round the early heather. Already, too, we have heard the scream of the greenfinch, betokening sunny days, and the robin, and wren, and hedge-sparrow. About six o’clock thrushes are almost deafening in the garden and woods, though many, being young birds, have not the vocabulary given them by Tennyson, and only do a good deal of rather poor singing in their efforts to imitate older birds.

MARCH TENTH.

OLD FLOWER NAMES.

I must add more loved old-world flower names to my dear Kalendar. I will begin with the Heart's-ease, for no flower ever had so many names, or so much attention.

Pancy = Three-Faces-under-a-Hood, Herb Trinity,
Call-me-to-you, Love-in-Idleness, Ladies'-Delight,
Flower-of-Love, Herbe Constancy, Pawnce,
Jump-up-and-kiss-me, Tickle-my-fancy, Kiss-me-
ere-I-rise, Johnny-jump-up.

Celandine = Swallow-Wort.

Auricula = Bear's Ear, Hare's Ears.

Sweet William = Sweet-John, London Tufts.

Anemone = Winde-Flower, Pasque Flower, Cow-bell.

Tulip = Dalmatian Cap.

Snap Dragon = Calves' Snout, Lyon's Snap.

Nicotina = Henbane of Peru.

Holly = Hulver, Holme.

Colewort = Herb Bonnet.

Columbine = Cocksfoot, Culverwort.

Pennywort = Mother of thousands.

Oleander = Rose Bay.

Syringa = Pipe Tree.

Foxglove = Finger Flowers.

Mimosa = Humble Plant.

St. John's Wort = Grace of God.

Forget-me-not = Scorpion Grasse, Mouse-ear.

Laburnum = Golden Rain.

Pimpernel = Poor man's weather-glass, Shepherd's
warning.

Alliaria = Jacke-by-the-hedge, Sawce alone.

Goat's Beard = Joseph's Floure, Noon-tide, Go-to-bed-
at-noon, Star of Jerusalem.

MARCH ELEVENTH.—I am already finding so many nests, little bird homes all over the garden.

*“ Leaf, woven homes, where twitter-words
Will grow to songs, and eggs to birds;
Ambitious buds shall swell to flowers,
And April smiles to sunny hours.
Bright days shall be, and gentle nights
Full of soft breath and echo-lights,
As if the god of sun-time kept
His eyes half open while he slept.
Roses shall be where roses were,
Not shadows, but reality;
As if they never perished there,
But slept in immortality:
Nature shall thrill with new delight,
And Time’s relumined river run
Warm as young blood, and dazzling bright,
As if its source were in the sun.”*

So writes Tom Hood. A very old book, *Nature Display’d*, lies before me with this description: “One Species builds its Nest on the Top of Trees; Another chuses to settle on the Ground, under a Canopy of Grass, but where-ever they dispose themselves, they are always accommodated with a Shelter, and either make Choice of Herbs, or a Shady Branch, or a double Roof of Leaves, down the Slope of which the Rain trickles, without Entering into the little opening of the Nest that lies conceal’d below. The Nest is raised on some solid Materials that strengthen it with a Foundation; for which Purpose they make use of Thorns, Reeds, thick Hay and compact Moss.”

MARCH TWELFTH.—"Labourers are plashing and trimming the hedges, and in all directions are teams at plough." The rooks are building low, so it will be a wet spring. If on a bright sunny day a small company of rooks suddenly fly overhead, as if in haste, you may be sure stormy weather is at hand, if not on the morrow, on the day following.

In the *History of Selborne* Gilbert White writes: "Rooks are continually fighting, and pulling each other's nests to pieces: these proceedings are inconsistent with living in such close community. And yet, if a pair offer to build in a single tree, the nest is plundered and demolished at once. Some rooks roost on their nest trees. The twigs which the rooks drop in building supply the poor with brushwood to light their fires. Some unhappy pairs are not permitted to finish any nest till the rest have completed their building. As soon as they get a few sticks together, a party comes and demolishes the whole. As soon as rooks have finished their nests, and before they lay, the cocks begin to feed the hens, who receive their bounty with a fondling, tremulous voice and fluttering wings, and all the little blandishments that are expressed by the young while in a helpless state. This gallant deportment of the male is continued through the whole season of incubation."

*"What is the beginning? Love. What the course? Love still.
What the goal? The goal is Love on the happy hill.
Is there nothing then but Love, search we sky or earth?
There is nothing out of Love hath perpetual worth:
All things flag but only Love, all things fail or flee;
There is nothing left but Love worthy you and me."*

MARCH THIRTEENTH.

*"How many a thing that pretty is, delays
 The wanderer's steps beneath the sun's soft rays.
 Gay daffodils bend o'er the watery gleam,
 Doubling their flickered image in the stream;
 The woody nook, where bells of brightest blue
 Have clothed the ground with heaven's ethereal hue;
 The lane's high-sloping bank, where pale primrose,
 With hundreds of its gentle kindred blows;
 And speckled daisies, that on upland bare,
 Their round eyes opening, scatter gladness there;
 Man looks on nature with a grateful smile,
 And thinks of nature's bounteous Lord the while."*

The profuse flowering of the almond-tree was formerly considered as indicative of an abundant harvest. This is alluded to in the following :—

*"Mark well the flowering almond in the wood;
 If odorous blooms the bearing branches load,
 The glebe will answer to the sylvan reign,
 Great heats will follow, and large crops of grain.
 But if a wood of leaves o'ershade the tree,
 Such, and so barren, will the harvest be;
 In vain the hind shall vex the threshing floor,
 For empty straw and chaff shall be thy store."*

—VIRGIL.

*"Thou wilt remember one warm morn when winter
 Crept aged from the earth, and spring's first breath
 Blew soft from the moist hills; the black-thorn boughs,
 So dark in the bare wood, when glistening
 In the sunshine were white with coming buds,
 Like the bright side of a sorrow, and the banks
 Had violets opening from sleep like eyes."*

—BROWNING.

MARCH FOURTEENTH.—“The days begin to lengthen apace: the forward Gardens give many a fine Sallet; and a nose-gay of violets is a present for a Lady: the Prime-Rose is now in his Prime, and the trees begin to bud, and the greene spices of Grasse to peep out of the earth. Now is Nature as it were waking out of her sleep. It is now time, honest Countryman, to make an end of sowing of all sorts of small pulse, Graffe all sorts of fruit-trees, and with young Plants and Syrens replenish your Nurcery. Cover the roots of all trees that are bared, and with fat and pregnant Earth lay them close and warme. If any Trees grew barren, bore holes in the roots, and drive pins or hard wedges of oake wood therein; and that will produce fruitfulness. Transplant all sort of Summer Flowers, especially the Crown imperial, Tulips, Hyacinths, and Narsessus of all shapes and colours.”—BRETON, 1626.

“If the busy scenes of life, in which many are obliged to move, suppress for awhile this divine excitement (the love of flowers), yet the chief occupant of their thoughts is no sooner relinquished, than a natural inclination immediately evince themselves. They sigh for rural retirement, there to enjoy the uncontaminated atmosphere of Nature, to cultivate its choicest gifts, and to linger over its vegetable beauties.”—MAUND.

“’Tis contentation that alone
Can make us happy here below,
And when this little life is gone,
Will lift us up to heav’n too.”

MARCH FIFTEENTH.—This is the day I prune my hybrid roses. It is best to cut them hard back.

*“ I will not have the maid Clytie,
Whose head’s turned by the sun ;
The tulip is a courtly queen
Whom, therefore, I will shun ;
The cowslip is a country wench,
The violet is a nun ;
But I will woo the dainty rose,
The queen of every one.*

*The pea is but a wanton witch,
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand :
The wolf’s-bane I should dread ;
Nor will I dreary rosemary
That always mourns the dead—
But I will woo the dainty rose
With the cheeks of tender red.*

*The lily is all in white like a saint,
And so is no mate for me ;
And the daisy’s cheek is tipped with a blush,
She is of such low degree ;
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom’s betrothed to the bee—
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.”*

—T. HOOD.

*“ Meadows have flowers that pleasure move,
Though Roses are the flowers of Love.”*

MARCH SIXTEENTH.—"When the *Laurus Tinus* has perform'd its part in the last Months of the Winter Season, and even to the return of Spring, it quits the Scene, and is succeeded by the Lilacs, which we intermix, by disposing Boxes of the white and blue Clusters, in alternate Ranges ; These are the immediate Predecessors of the *Gelder-Rose*, the Honey-Suckle, the common Jessamin, rising on Stems, or rounded by Hoops, into the form of a Vase ; the *Spanish Broom*, and the *Persian Lilacs*, and the Yellow Jessamins, and those of *India*, *Arabia*, and *Catalonia*, which continue flowery for several Months, notwithstanding the daily Tributes they tender to each new Visitor who approaches them."—*Nature Display'd*, 1736.

I have just found a plant of *osmunda fern*, the young fronds are peeping, and I have looked it up in Gerard. He says the fern is called "Water-Ferne, Osmund the Water-man : Saint Christopher's herbe, and Osmund Royall. It groweth in the midst of a bog at the further end of Hampstead heath from London, at the bottom of a hill adjoining to a small cottage, and in divers other places, as also upon divers bogges on a heath or a common neere unto Bruntwood in Essex, especially neere unto a place there that some have digged, to the end to finde a nest or mine of gold ; but the birds were over fledge, and flowne away before their wings could be clipped. The root being brought into the Garden prospereth as in his native soil, as my self have proved."

MARCH SEVENTEENTH.—ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

SPENSER, in 1596, wrote : "The Irish, at this day, when they goe to battaile, say certain prayers or charmes to their swords, making a cross therewith upon the Earth, and thrusting the points of their blades into the ground, thinking thereby to have a better successe in fight." And now-a-days our brave soldiers think a sprig of shamrock is charm enough. "When St. Patrick preached the Gospel to the pagan Irish (about the year 432), he illustrated the doctrine of the Trinity by showing them a trefoil, or three-leaved grass with one stalk, which, operating to their conviction, the Shamrock, which is a bundle of this grass, was ever afterwards worn upon this Saint's anniversary to commemorate the event."

● " *Let merry England proudly rear
Her blended roses bought so dear ;
Let Scotland bind her bonnet blue
With heath and harebell dipped in dew ;
On favoured Erin's crest be seen
The plant she loves of emerald green.*"

—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

I believe the Irish people look on the shamrock as a sacred plant, and it was with this holy herb that St. Patrick drove all snakes from the land. To find a four-leaved clover is considered by all of us to be the luckiest thing on earth.

MARCH EIGHTEENTH.

“*Oh, what a dawn of day,
How the March sun feels like May !
All is blue again
After last night's rain,
And the South dries the hawthorn spray
Only, my Love's away !
I'd as lief that the blue were grey.*”

—BROWNING.

“As spring approaches the Bull-finch visits our gardens, an insidious plunderer. Its delight is in the embryo blossoms wrapped up at this season in the bud of a tree ; and it is very dainty and curious in its choice of this jewel, seldom feeding upon two kinds at the same time. It generally commences with the germs of our larger and most early gooseberry ; and the bright red breasts of four or five cock birds, quietly feeding in the leafless bush, are a very pretty sight, but the consequences are ruinous to the crop. When the cherry buds begin to come forward, they quit the gooseberry, and make tremendous havoc with these. I have an early wall cherry, a mayduke by reputation, that has for years been a great favourite with the bull-finch family, and its celebrity seems to be communicated to each successive generation. It buds profusely, but is annually so stripped of its promise by these feathered rogues, that its kind might almost be doubted.”—*Journal of a Naturalist*, 1830.

Oh ! the Bull-finches ! They eat every flower bud off the snowy mespilus on the lawn year after year. I would fain rid the garden of them, but it is difficult to harden one's heart !

MARCH NINETEENTH.—This day is full of memories. I take a picture in my hand and I look into the soft eyes, and feel the mother-love around me still.

*“Oh that those lips had language! Life has pass’d
With me but (smoothly) since I saw thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
‘Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away.’
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalise—
The art that baffles Time’s tyrannic claim
To quench it!) here shines on me still the same!”*

WILD NOSEGAY.

*“The yellow lambtoe I have often got,
Sweet creeping o’er the banks in summer-time,
And totter-grass, in many a trembling knot;
And robb’d the molehill of its bed of thyme:
And oft with anxious feelings would I climb
The waving willow-row, a stick to trim,
To reach the water-lily’s tempting flower
That on the surface of the pool did swim:
I’ve stretch’d, and tried vain schemes for many an hour;
And scrambled up the hawthorn’s prickly bower
For ramping woodbines and blue bitter-sweet.
Still Summer blooms, these flowers appear again;
But, ah, the question’s useless to repeat,
When will the feelings come I witness’d then?”*

—CLARE.

MARCH TWENTIETH.—I prithee note this is the first day of Spring.

*“ March ! how mild thy genial hours,
Soft azure skies, and gilded showers,
Now the young Wheat’s transient gleam,
Where sunfits chasing shadows, stream ;
Now, in quick effulgence seen,
On yonder slope, its sparkling green ;
And sprinkled o’er the mossy mould,
Crocuses, like drops of gold,
And the Lent-lily’s paler yellow,
Where flower the Asp, and Water willow ;
And the Polyanthus, fair
Its hues, as bathed in Summer air ;
And the white Violets that just peep,
And, sheltered by the Rosemary, sleep.
Round the trunk of yon hoar tree,
Here and there, a humming Bee
That wanders to the sunny nook,
Or seeks, hard by, the glittering brook.
And in each Ash and Elm’s grey crest,
Cawing Rooks, that frame the nest
Anew, or with parental care
Their cradles worn by time repair—
These, this moment meet my eyes,
Or my charmed ear surprise ;—
Sounds that melt and sights that seem
To wave o’er winter like a dream.”*

—“ Polwhele’s Poetical Calendar of Nature.”

Yes, in the first burst of spring winter departs and the world is young again.

MARCH TWENTY-FIRST.—"Tho' *Adam*, and every one of us in him, were depriv'd of *Paradise*, with its delightful *Garden*, yet there still remain'd in his, as well as in our *Nature*, a *Propensity*, or natural *Inclination* to *Gardens* and a *Country Life*: *God* having at the *Beginning* appoint'd *Paradise* for the *Dwelling-place* for *Man*, and design'd all sorts of *Fruits* for his *Food*. And we still find in our *Gardens* a pleasing *Resemblance* of that glorious *Paradise*, sufficient to charm our *Senses*, and to raise and invigorate our *Spirits*. We see at different times of the *Year*, in a neat and well-kept *Garden*, *Tulips*, *Anemones*, *Hyacinths*, *Auriculas*, *Roses*, *Lillies*, &c., and when *Autumn* is a little further advanc'd, we have *Beazart Carnations* most surprisingly variegated with fine *Colours*, the *Picotées* so artfully spotted, and *Flakes* with their two *Colours* so finely intermix'd, as almost to dazzle our *Eyes*. If we take a turn in the walks among the *Trees*, our *Ears* are diverted with the *Warbling* of little *Birds* singing as they flutter about from *Bough* to *Bough*, and seeming to rejoice at the *Works* of their *Maker*. Besides this, we hear the pleasant whispering *Zephyrs* fanning the *Air* among the leaves.—*Treatise of Husbandry and Gardening.*

MARCH TWENTY-SECOND.—The wall-flowers to-day are like burnished copper in the sun, the Yellow Stock-Gillofloures, Wall-Gillofloure, Winter-Gillofloure of olden days. I can hardly tell why, but the flower ever reminds me of my childhood. I feel to-day that we hardly treat this flower with proper respect, and yet it is a brave plant “and mindeth not the winter.”

HOW THE WALL-FLOWER CAME FIRST AND WHY
SO CALLED

*“Why this Flower is now call’d so,
List, sweet maids, and you shall know.
Understand, this First-ling was
Once a brisk and bonny Lasse,
Kept as close as Danaë was :
Who a sprightly Springall lov’d,
And to have it fully prov’d,
Up she got upon a wall,
Tempting down to slide withall :
But the silken twist unty’d,
So she fell, and bruis’d, she dy’d.
Lone in pitty of the deed,
And her loving-lucklesse speed,
Twin’d her to this Plant, we call
Now, The Flower of the Wall.”*

—HERRICK.

“Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow.”

MARCH TWENTY-THIRD.—As we live in a hop country I feel bound to enter in my Kalendar all that I can find as to their growth. Tusser (1573) gives us the most advice :—

*“ In March at the farthest, dry season or wet,
Hop roots so well chosen, let skillful go set ;
The goodlier and younger, the better I love ;
Well gutted and pared the better they prove.*

*Some layeth them crosswise, along in the ground,
As high as the knee, they do cover up round ;
Some pick up a stick in the midst of the same,
That little round hillock the better to frame.*

*Some maketh a hollowness half a foot deep,
With fouër sets is it, set slantwise asteep ;
One foot from another, in order to lie,
And thereon a hillock as round as a pie.*

*Five foot from another, each hillock would stand,
As straight as a levelled line with the hand :
Let every hillock be fouër feet wide,
The better to come to on every side.*

*By willows that growen thy hop yard without,
And also by hedges thy meadows about,
Good Hop hath a pleasure to climb and to spread,
If sun may have passage to comfort her head.*

*Things grafted or planted, the greatest and least,
Defend against Tempest, the Bird, and the Beast,
Defended shall prosper, the tother is lost,
The thing with the labour, the time and the cost.”*

MARCH TWENTY-FOURTH.—To-day I have devoted to the violet.

*“Violet is for faithfulness,
Which in me shall abide;
Hoping likewise that from your heart
You will not let it slide,
And will continue in the same,
As you have now begunne;
And then for ever to abide,
Then you my heart have wonne.”* (1584.)

I note that Shakespeare was very kind to the violet. I love the verse—

*“When daisies pied, and violets blue,
And cuckoo buds of yellow hue,
And Lady-smocks, all silver white,
Do paint the meadows with delight.”*

“Delight” is such a pretty word, and so often used in olden days. “Garden of Delight,” “A handfull of Delights,” “A Queen’s Delight.” The scent of violets pleases many a poet’s fancy. Here is Shakespeare again :—

*“To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet;
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful, and ridiculous excess.”*

*“Take of my violets ! I have found them when
The liquid south stole o’er them, on a bank
That leaned to running water. There’s to me
A daintiness about these early flowers
That touches me like poetry.”*

MARCH TWENTY-FIFTH.—I have been looking over all the old flower names I have collected. How many there are named after the Mother of our Lord. Here are some of them.

Lily of the Valley, *Our Lady's Tears*, or *Mary's Tears*. *Mary-gold* is, of course, her flower, the gold being the halo round her head. *Rosemary* is hers too, flowering, as it does, about the time of our Saviour's Birth. Forget-me-nots are *Our Lady's Eyes*. Mulleins are *Our Lady's Candles*. Clematis is *Ladies' Bower*, or *Virgin's Bower*. The white Lily of our gardens is *Mary's Lily* or *Madonna Lily*, and others are—

Solomon's Seal	Lady's Seal.
Alchemilla	Lady's Mantle.
Marsh Marygold . . .	Mary Buds.
Lyre Flower	Lady's Eardrop.
Quaking Grass	Ladies' Hair.
Harebell	Our Lady's Thimble.
Campion	Our Lady's Rose.
Thrift	Our Lady's Cushion.
Mint	Our Lady's Mint.
Bedstraw	Our Lady's Bedstraw,
	because of the Manger in the Stable.
Honeysuckle	Our Lady's Fingers.

In Germany the Cowslip is called "Our Lady's Key." Then we have the Cuckoo Flowers, Lady's Smock, Lady's Signet, Lady's Tresses.

*"Then comes the Daffodil beside
Our Ladies' Smock at our Ladye Tyde."*

MARCH TWENTY-SIXTH.—Quick, Quick! Haste thee to the window, Cynthia. I see a little bird flitting amidst the mespilus boughs. Oh! how tiny it is, and yet so faithful in its coming. Spring is here, I tell thee, at last—at last.

THE CHIFF-CHAFF.

Among the many birds who come to us every year from far-off lands to nest, there is perhaps none whose arrival is more eagerly watched for, by the true bird lover, than the tiny chiff-chaff. This little wanderer, dull though he be to the eye, and insignificant though his song be to the ear, holds an important post of his own. He is the vanguard of that flying host which reaches us in the glad spring-time, and what the cuckoo is to the vulgar herd, the tiny chiff-chaff is to the few—the harbinger of spring. He it is who first comes to tell us that winter is past, and I feel certain that he loves us; as he is the first to come he is the last to go, and we hear his monotonous little song even in September. The chiff-chaff is a clever little architect, building her nest, which is half-domed, with grasses, leaves, or moss, according to the position she has chosen. The nest is generally placed on or near the ground, but not infrequently at some considerable height above it. In fact the chiff-chaff may be said to build in almost any situation except the common bush, provided there is abundance of cover to conceal her little home. A chiff-chaff builds in our rhododendrons; but then I will not allow that is a “common bush.”

MARCH TWENTY-SEVENTH.—As this is the month when the migrants arrive I have consulted John Ray, 1660. He writes in *The Wisdom of God* : “The migration of Birds from a hotter to a colder country, or a colder to a hotter, according to the Seasons of the Year, as their Nature is, I know not how to give an account of, it is so strange and admirable. What moves them to shift their Quarters? You will say, The disagreeableness of the temper of the Air to the constitution of their Bodies, or want of Food. But how come they to be directed to the same place yearly, tho’ sometimes but a little Island, which they could not possibly see, and so it could have no influence upon them that way? The Cold or the Heat might possibly drive them in a right line from either, but that they should impel Land Birds to venture over a wide Ocean, of which they can see no end, is strange and unaccountable: one would think that the sight of so much Water, and present fear of drowning should overcome the sense of Hunger, or disagreeableness of the temper of the Air. Besides, how come they to steer their course aright to their several Quarters, which before the Compass was invented was hard for Man himself to do, they being not able, as I noted before, to see them at that distance? Think we that the *Quails*, for instance, could see quite across the *Mediterranean Sea*? And yet, it’s clear, they fly out of *Italy* into *Africa*, lighting many times on Ships in the midst of the Sea, to rest themselves when tir’d and spent with flying. That they should thus shift places, is very convenient for them, and accordingly we see they do it; which seems to be impossible they should, unless themselves were endu’d with Reason or directed and acted by a Superior Intelligent Cause.”

MARCH TWENTY-EIGHTH.

*“What though the opening spring be chill,
Although the lark, check’d in his airy path,
Eke out his song, perch’d on the fallow clod
That still o’ertops the blade! Although no branch
Have spread its foliage save the willow wand
That dips its pale leaves in the swollen stream!
What though the clouds oft lower! these threats but end
In sunny showers, that scarcely fill the folds
Of moss-couch’d violet, or interrupt
The merle’s dulcet pipe, melodious bird!
He, hid behind the milk-white sloe-thorn spray,
Whose early flowers anticipate the leaf,
Welcomes the time of buds, the infant year.”*

—GRAHAME.

OLD SONG.

*“The Lowest trees have tops, the ant his gall,
The fly her spleen, the little spark his heat;
And slender hairs cast shadows, though but small,
And bees have stings, although they be not great;
Seas have their source, and so have shallow springs;
And love is love in beggars and in kings!*

*Where waters smoothest run, deep are the fords;
The dial stirs, yet none perceives it move;
The firmest faith is in the fewest words;
The turtles cannot sing, and yet they love;
True hearts have eyes and ears, no tongues to speak;
They hear, and see, and sigh, and then they break.”*

(1603.)

MARCH TWENTY-NINTH.—In all the old books I have read (and I have lived in them now for months) I find the same flowers noted time after time. Anemones, Tulips, Carnations, and Auriculas. I am growing weary of them! I *think* I will banish them from my heart. In *Nature Display'd*, written early in the eighteenth century, I read: "It is one of the last party-coloured Anemonies, and alone presents me with all the Beauties I admire in the whole Parterre. I here observe a Variety of different Colours, which grow fainter by degrees, and by the softest Diminutions, lose themselves in the Lustre of the adjoining Tints. The Tulip, on the contrary, limits its Colours by a delicate Stripe, which is elegantly distinguished; and by contrasting one Colour from another, heightens the radiant complexion of both." Again, referring to the Anemone, I read: "It requires Judgment to form a beautiful Bed of these Flowers; in which Particular, two precautions are necessary. In the first place, we must give them a proper Intermixture, by disposing the Flame-Colours after the Carnations; the White, the Violet-Hues, and the Bizarrs, should next appear, and be succeeded by the brown, the striped, and clouded Dyes." In another book, comparatively modern, say only a hundred years old, I find that "In former days this flower was believed to possess such magical virtues, that the sages of old times recommended every person to gather, in spring, the earliest anemone he saw, and keep it as a preservation from pestilence."

MARCH THIRTIETH.—Perilla, I pray of you to paint flowers, to sing of birds, to write of Nature. Why be idle in your studio and keep all the beauties in your heart silent? We are bound to give all that is best in us to others (for what is our best is not our own, only given to our keeping for a little while), as we are bound to pick our finest blooms for our neighbour's delight. Our sweetest thoughts are given us to share with those we love or need our help. See what Ruskin tells us: "What you have with you, and before you, daily, dearest to your sight and heart, *that*, by the magic of your hand, or of your lips, you can gloriously express to others; and what you ought to have in your sight and heart,—what, if you have not, nothing else can be truly seen or loved—is the human life of your own people;" and may I add the life of Nature around you, aye, the Life of God. Oh! Perilla, when a bird sings, do you not feel a thrill of joy? When the first rose-bud opens in the sun do you not realise *THE LIFE*, when the glow of sunset lights up yonder wood, do you not feel a glow of glorious love in your heart and an intense longing to rise and meet the Light? *To be splendid*, that is our aim in life. To reach beyond the daily run of little things. To trust utterly the One Who sees the Whole, and to know *for certain* all is well.

Look from your window. Do you see a yellow butterfly poised on that Madonna lily near the old sun-dial? Think out that nature lesson for yourself. It is enough for a day at least!

MARCH THIRTY-FIRST.

"Now the golden morn aloft
 Waves her dew-bespangled wing ;
 With vermeil cheek, and whisper soft,
 She wooes the tardy Spring ;
 Till April starts and calls around
 The sleeping fragrance from the ground ;
 And lightly o'er the living scene
 Scatters her freshest, tenderest green."

"The fields did laugh, the flowers did freshly spring,
 The trees did bud, and early blossoms bore ;
 And all the quire of birds did sweetly sing,
 And told that gardens pleasure in their caroling."

—SPENSER.

"In the wind of windy March
 The catkins drop down,
 Curly, caterpillar like,
 Curious green and brown.
 With concourse of nest-building birds
 And leaf-buds by the way,
 We begin to think of flowers
 And life and nuts some day."

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

"March comes in with an adder's head, but goes out like a peacock's tail."

"He who freely lops in March will get his lap full of fruit."

"In March kill crow, pie, and cadow,
 Rook, buzzard, and raven ;
 Or else go desire them
 To seek a new haven."

APRIL FIRST.—All Fool's Day ! But in my Kalendar of Delights I can take no notice of such a day !

My flowers for April are, first from "The Compleat Gard'ner" (1649) : "An Infinite number of Flowers, as *Anemonies*, *Ranunculus's* or *Crow-foots*, *Imperials*, *Narcissus*, *Prim Roses*, Violets, Hepatica's, both red and pale blue, and about the end of the month we have fair Tulips."

Bacon gives us "In Aprill follow The Double White Violet ; The Wall-flower ; The Stock-Gilly-Flower ; The Couslip ; Flour-De-lices, and Lillies of all Natures ; Rosemary Flowers ; The Tulippa ; The Double Piony ; The Pale Daffadill ; The French Honey-Suckle ; The Cherry-Tree in Blossome ; The Dammasin ; and Plum-Trees in Blossome ; The White-Thorne in leafe ; The Lelacke Tree."

I wonder why these old writers do not keep to the same names for flowers ? Here Bacon speaks of a "wall-flower" and "The Stock-Gilly-Flower," while they are one and the self-same flower !

Among the Romans the feast of Venus was held on this day, because she is "the figurative Emblem of the reproductive power inherent in nature. . . . The Rose, the Myrtle, and the Apple were sacred to her ; and among birds, the Dove, the Swan, and the Sparrow."

*"The Seeds of god-like power are in us still ;
Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will."*

—MATT. ARNOLD.

APRIL SECOND.

*"Where that Aprilis blows her horn,
It is both good for hay and corn,
A dry time is for sowing best,
Before the garden's richly drest
In all the pomp of vernal flowers ;
Then comes the hasty April showers,
Which freshen each enamelled way,
The painted carpet of the lovely May."*

*"Now the winter's gloom
Hath wept itself in April showers away."*

*"Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now !"*

—BROWNING.

*"Sweete April showers,
Doo spring Maie flowers."*

—TUSSER.

APRIL.

*"Get into thy hopyard with plentie of poles,
Amongst these same hillocks devide them by doles.
Three poles to a hillock (I pas not how long)
Shall yeeld thee more profit, set deeplie and strong."*

—TUSSER, 1573.



APRIL



APRIL THIRD.—The children have been making daisy chains. There are no cowslips yet awhile for cowslip balls, and as they, like their elders, are in search of a new sensation, a fresh idea, I have been reading to them out of an old book. I bade them first take “a small branch or long spray of the white-thorn, with all its spines uninjured, and on its alternate thorns, a white and a blue violet, plucked from their stalks, are stuck upright in succession, until the thorns are covered, and when placed in a flower-pot of moss, has perfectly the appearance of a beautiful vernal flowering dwarf shrub, and as long as it remains fresh, is an object of surprise and delight.” I think this is a pretty idea and worthy of note. I have just been teaching the children to make “Aunt Sallies” out of great white daisies. You chip the white petals round the centre for the frill of a white cap, leaving four petals for strings at the bottom. Then with a brush you paint in eyes, nose, and mouth on the yellow centre, and you have a wonderful miniature face of an old woman. Let any child try and they are bound to be charmed with the result. Later on the big garden daisies make splendid Aunt Sallies. Daisy chains have been a joy for all time, and cowslip balls. I can remember now the joy of my first cowslip ball, only I was always sorry to pull the dear flowers to pieces. How many of us can say that youth with all its joys is with us still?

APRIL FOURTH.—Star of Bethlehem. “Eleven o’clock Lady.” “These flowers open themselves at the rising of the Sunne, and shut again at the Sun-Setting.”—GERARD.

“These flowers are made of six pure white leaves a peece which close as they do every night, and open themselves in the day time especially in the Sunne, the smell thereof is pretty sweete, but weake.”—PARKINSON.

The Grape Hyacinth is also in flower to-day, and is a dear old-fashioned flower. Here is Gerard’s description of it. How I love the wording in these old *Herbals*: “The small Grape-floure hath many long fat and weake leaves trailing upon the Ground, hollow in the middle like a little trough; amongst which come forth thicke soft smooth and weake stalkes, leaning this way and that way, as not able to stand up right by reason it is surcharged with very heauey floures on the top, consisting of many little bottle-like blew floures, closely thrust or packed together like a bunch of Grapes, of a strong smell yet not unpleasant, somewhat resembling the flavour of an orange.”

“*Is there a heart that beats and lives,
To which no joy the spring-time gives?
Alas, in that unfeeling heart
No love nor kindness hath part;
Blest he who finds, perchance unsought,
Fresh matter for improving thought;
And more, the more he looks abroad,
Marks, owns, and loves, the present God.*”

—BISHOP MANT.

APRIL FIFTH.

APRIL FROM TIME'S TELESCOPE.

*"Earth now is green, and heaven is blue ;
Lively Spring which makes all new,
Jolly Spring doth enter ;
Sweet young sunbeams do subdue
Angry, aged Winter.*

*Winds are mild, and seas are calm,
Every meadow flows with balm,
The earth wears all her riches ;
Harmonious birds sing such a psalm
As ear and heart bewitches."*

*"Ere man is aware
That the Spring is here
The flowers have found it out."*

—OLD CHINESE SAYING.

*"The ousel-cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill,
The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo grey,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay."*

—SHAKESPEARE.

"The bird has exactly the degree of emotion, the extent of science, and the command of art, which are necessary for its happiness."—RUSKIN.

APRIL SIXTH.

*"When first the Spring has Winter's Frost unbound,
The Savains with Box should plant your level Ground ;
The gloomy Skies will oft retard your Speed,
Tea Phæbus court, and as he smiles proceed."*

—RAPIN.

He too suggests instead of Box—

*"Or bord' rings which more fashionable are
And with Variety look always fair ;
As Sedums, Thrift, Pinks, Lavender, and Rhue,
Sweet Marjoram, Thyme, and such like edgings do."*

—RAPIN.

Parkinson's ideas on the subject are very helpful. He, also, bids us use "Germanders as an edging, also Marjerome, Savorie, and Thyme, in the like manner being sweete herbes, are used to border up beds and knots, and will be kept, for a little while, with cutting, in some conformity." For hedges round a garden he gives us further advice :—

"For to border the whole square or knot about, to serve as a hedge thereunto, every one taketh what liketh him best, as either Privet alone, or Sweet Bryer, and White Thorne, enterlaced together, and Roses of one, or two, or more sorts placed here and there amongst them. Some also take Lavender, Rosemary, Sage, Southernwood, Lavender Cotton, and some such other thing. Some againe plant Cornell Trees, and plash them, or keepe them lowe, to forme them into a hedge. And some againe take a low prickly shrubbe, that abideth always greene, called in Latine *Pyracantha*, which in time will make an ever greene hedge or border, or when it beareth fruit, which are red berries, make a glorious show." For myself, I think white pinks make a splendid edging.

APRIL SEVENTH.—Closely related to the Chiff-chaff, the Willow Wren is one of our earliest spring visitors, and he follows close on the heels of his cousin, from whom he differs in appearance, being yellower in hue, though of much the same build and size. The song of this little migrant is a merry, joyous utterance. Starting high up in the scale, he gradually descends in almost laughing notes, so happy and blithe is he ; indeed he trickles down in a joyous cadence in a manner peculiar to himself. Any locality seems to suit him equally well, whether it be a wood, or common, or fringe of a running stream ; and we could ill spare his voice from our country rambles. He is sometimes called the oven-bird, because his nest is domed over. He builds on the ground, on a sunny bank amid long grass, of which the nest is generally composed, or even amid a dry clump of heather. He has made his home at the foot of the golden broom in our field, where the blue buglos towers above him, and a red poppy peeps at him from behind a whinbush.

*“The little birds which singe so swete,
Are like the angelles voyce.”*

(1573.)

APRIL EIGHTH.—Clare writes, too, perfectly of flowers in his poem, “The Wild-Flower Nosegay.” It was culled in April.

“Crimp-frilled daisy, bright bronze butter cup,
 Freckt cowsleep-peeps, gilt whins of morning’s dew,
 And hooded arum early sprouting up
 Ere the white-thorn bud half unfolds to view,
 And wan-hued lady-smocks, that love to spring
 ’Side the swamp margin of some plashy pond;
 And all the blooms that early Aprils bring,
 With eager joy each fill’d my playful hand;

The ragged-robins by the spinney lake,
 And flag-flower bunches deeper down the flood,
 And, snugly hiding ’neath the feather’d brake,
 Full many a blue-bell flower and cuckoo-bud,
 And old-man’s beard that wreath’d along the hedge
 Its oddly rude, misshapen, tawny flowers,
 And prickly burs that crowd the leaves of sedge,
 Have claim’d my pleasing search for hours and hours.

And down the hay-fields, wading ’bove the knees
 Through seas of waving grass, what days I’ve gone,
 Cheating the hopes of many labouring bees
 By cropping blossoms they were perch’d upon;
 As thyme along the hills, and lambtoe knots,
 And the wild stalking Canterbury bell,
 By hedge-row side or bushy bordering spots,
 That loves in shade and solitude to dwell.”

I have only copied three verses. Certainly Clare appeals to the lover of country delights.

APRIL NINTH.—This is Swallow Day. I knew well “one Swallow does not make a Summer.” This I know, also, that you may not sow your Nasturtian seeds untill you have seen *two* Swallows. A very good rule, and one I always keep. For some reason I am forced into putting the Celandine down for Swallow Day. There is a mysterious connection between the two. Another name for Celandine is “Swallow-Wort.” Here is what Gerard says :—

“It is called Celandine, not because it first springeth at the coming in of Swallows, or dieth when they go away (for we have said it may be found all the yere) ; but because some hold opinion, that with this herb dams restore sight to their young ones when they cannot see. Which things are vain and false ; for *Cornelius Celsus* witnesseth, That when the sight of the eies of divers young birds is put forth by some outward means, it will after a time be restored of it selfe, and soonest of all the sight of the Swallowe : where upon (as the same Author saith) the tale grew, how thorow an herb the dams restore that thing which healeth of its selfe. The very same doth *Aristotle* alledge. The eies of Swallowes (saith he) that are not fledge, if a man do pricke them out, do afterwards grow againe and perfectly recover their sight.”

The Celandine shuts up its blossoms before rain, and even in fine weather it does not care to awake early ; indeed they will not look out upon the sun till nine o'clock ; and by five in the evening they are folded up for the night. Perhaps the Swallow passing overhead sees the gold sparkle of the flower, and is attracted thereby.

APRIL TENTH.

*"The sweet south wind—so long
Sleeping in other climes on sunny seas,
Or dallying with the orange-trees
In the bright land of song ;—
Wakes unto us and laughingly sweeps by,
Like a glad spirit of the sunlit sky.*

*The bursting buds look up
And greet the sunlight while it lingers yet
On the warm hill-side, and the violet
Opens her azure cup
Meekly, and countless wild flowers wake to fling
'Their earliest incense on the gales of Spring.'*

This is by an unknown author, and I have found other verses in an old book unsigned.

*"Talk to my heart, Oh, Winds !
Talk to my heart to-night ;
My spirit always finds
With you a new delight,
Finds always a new delight
In your silver talk at night.*

*Give me your soft embrace,
As you used to long ago
In your shadowy trysting place,
When you seem'd to love me so,—
When you meekly kiss'd me so,
On the green hills, long ago."*

This poem is brimful of memories and mystery. It is full of love. Luckily, as the years pass, we may still turn to Nature for sympathy, while looking at Life more trustfully, more patiently, and, may we say ?—more unselfishly.

APRIL ELEVENTH.

*“As spring’s warm herald April comes,
As Nature’s sleep is nearly past,
How sweet to hear the awakening hums
Of aught beside the winter blast!
Of feather’d minstrels first and last,
The robin’s song’s again begun;
And, as skies clear when overcast,
Larks rise to hail the peeping sun.*

*The startling peewits, as they pass,
Scream joyous whirring over-head,
Right glad the fields and meadow grass
Will quickly hide their careless shed:
The rooks, where yonder wickens spread,
Quawk clamorous to the spring’s approach;
Here silent, from its watery bed,
To hail its coming, leaps the roach.*

*At distance from the water’s edge,
On hanging sallow’s farthest stretch,
The moor-hen ’gins her nest of sedge
Safe from destroying school-boy’s reach.
Fen-sparrows chirp and fly to fetch
The wither’d reed-down rustling nigh,
And, by the sunny side the ditch,
Prepare their dwelling warm and dry.”*

—CLARE.

*“The cuckoo and the nightingale
Full merrily do sing,
And with their pleasant roundelays
Do welcome back the spring.”*

APRIL TWELFTH.—To-day I find is dedicated to the Crown Imperial.

*“Then her gay gilded front th’ Imperial Crown
Erects aloft, and with a scornful Frown
O’erlooks the subject Plants, while humbly they
Wait round, and Homage to her Highness pay;
Beneath the Summit of her Stem is plac’d
A Diadem of Gold, and richly grav’d;
Thence verdant Leaves in bushy Plumes arise,
And crisp’d, and curling entertain the Eyes;
Beneath these Leaves four radiant Blossoms bent
Like painted Cups reversed are downwards sent;
No Flow’r aspires in Pomp and State more high,
Or lays a juster Claim to Majesty.”*

—RAPIN.

Parkinson tells us that “The Crowne Imperiall, for his stately beautiffulness, deserveth the first place in this our Garden of delight, to be here entreated of before all other Lillies. . . . It flowereth most commonly in the end of March, if the weather be milde, and springeth not out of the ground until the end of February or beginning of March, so quicke it is in the springing.” “To give the true colour, which by words otherwise cannot be expressed,” writes Gerard, “if you lay sap berries in steepe in faire water, and mixe a little saffron and lay it upon paper, it sheweth the perfect colour to limne or illumine the floure withall. . . . In the bottom of each of these bels (flowers) there is placed sixe drops of most cleare shining sweet water, in taste like sugar, resembling in shew faire orient pearles; the which drops if you take away, there do immediately appeare the like; notwithstanding if they be suffered to stand still in the floure they will never fall away, no not if you strike the plant untill it be broken.”

APRIL THIRTEENTH.

*“On Aprill, the Koo-coo can singe her song by rote,
In June, of tune, she cannot singe a note:
At first Koo-coo, Koo-coo, sing still can she do,
At last Kooke, Kooke, Kooke; six Kookes to one koo.
(1587.)*

“The Cuckoo begins early in the season, with the interval of a minor third.”

*“When squirrels dance, and humble bees
Come murmuring out of hollow trees
To rifle primrose flowers;
When cuckoos come o’er southern seas,
And with them bring the genial breeze
That wakes the drowsy hours.”*

—EDWARD QUILINAN.

*“When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo.*

*When shepherds pipe an oaten straws
And merry larks are ploughmen’s clocks,
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo;*

*Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!”*

—SHAKESPEARE.

APRIL FOURTEENTH.—It has been known for centuries that the vagabond Cuckoo is too lazy to make a nest for herself; that she lays her eggs, idle thing, in the nests of other birds; but until recently it was a matter of controversy how the eggs were placed in the nests. On several occasions cuckoos' eggs have been found in nests in crevices and other places, where it was impossible that a full-sized cuckoo could enter; but all doubt as to the method adopted by this bird has been put an end to, by the shooting of a cuckoo who was carrying an egg in her beak.

A farmer, living near by, lately observed a cuckoo hunting up and down an ivy-covered wall in which there was a wagtail's nest. The nest was more than usually well concealed, so to help the vagabond, the farmer drew the ivy leaves on one side and disclosed the nest. The cuckoo returned in a few minutes, and seeing the nest, popped into the ivy at the spot, and remained there while (as the farmer said) "one might fire a gun." On examination it was found that in that short interval of time an egg had been deposited, so it was practically impossible that it could have been laid there.

Whether the parent cuckoos take any further interest in their eggs or their young is not known; but, so far as we can judge by observation, they do not trouble themselves one jot about either.

APRIL FIFTEENTH.—To-day I prune my Tea Roses. It is an anxious moment, for so much depends on the cunning of my hand. In Culpepper's old *Herbal* I turn to "Roses," to see what he said in those far-off days :—

"What a pother have authors made with roses ! What a racket they have kept." This I may almost call rude, so I close the book.

*"I cannot all the Species rehearse
Of Roses, in the narrow bounds of Verse.
Some curl'd, some wav'd about the top are found,
And others with a thousand leaves are crown'd ;
Through which the flaming colours do appear,
Others are single, not t'insist on here,
Either the Damask, or Mimidian Rose,
Or Cistus, which in Lusitania grows.
Roses unarm'd."*

—RAPIN.

*"The Rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears ;
The Rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
A wilding Rose, whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years."*
—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

*"First of all the rose, because its breath
Is rich beyond the rest, and when it dies
It doth bequeath a charm to sweeten death."*

APRIL SIXTEENTH.

*"When the sloe-tree is as white as a sheet,
Sow your barley whether it be dry or wet."*

—OLD PROVERB.

*"This frequent Charge I give, whene'er you sow
The flow'ry Kindes, be studious first to know
The Monthly Tables, and with heedful Eye
Survey the lofty Volumes of the Skye ;
Observe the Tokens of foreboding Stars,
What Store of Wind and Rain the Moon prepares."*

—RAPIN.

Gilbert White tells us that "Blackthorn usually blossoms while cold N.-E. winds blow ; so that the harsh rugged weather obtaining at this season, is called by the country people black-thorn winter."

Here is a Love Potion from the Persian, 1685 : "A swallow which, in the Spring, raises all people by singing ; and it has such actions as these : If any one takes its young ones, and put them in a pot, and when it is luted up, bake them ; then, opening the pot, if he considers, he will find two young ones kissing one another ; and two turning one from the other. If therefore you take those two that kiss one another, and dissolve them in oil of roses, and give the ashes in drink, it is a love potion."

TO MAKE CONSERVES OF ROSES UNBOYLED.

"Take a pound of red Rose leaves, the whites cut off, stamp them very fine, take a pound of Sugar, and beat in with the Roses, and put it in a pot and cover it with leather, and set in a cool place."—*A Queen's Delight*, 1656.

APRIL SEVENTEENTH.

*"First, April, she with mellow showers
Opens the way for early flowers ;
Then after her comes smiling May,
In a more rich and sweet array ;
Next enters June, and brings us more
Jems, then those two, that went before :
Then (lastly), July comes, and she
More wealth brings in, then all those three."*

—HERRICK.

*"The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn ;
Morning's at seven ;
The hill-side's dew pearled ;
The lark's on the wing ;
The snail's on the thorn :
God's in His heaven——
All's right with the world."*

These lines give one strength to live, power to believe, courage to hope. "*All's right with the world.*" Then why are we troubled? Life is so short, and little worries cannot matter much if we try to rise above them.

*"'Tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes."*

And we, too, should enjoy the air we breathe. It is easy, in the Spring time, for if we stand still at the edge of the wood we may hear the green shoots under the dead leaves, we may hear the sap gently rising, we may understand the story of life in the song of birds. "*All's right with the world!*" Yes ; I know, I know. Spring teaches us that lesson.

APRIL EIGHTEENTH.

ON THE NESTING OF BIRDS.

*"A thousand bills are busy now ; the skies
Are winnowed by a thousand fluttering wings,*

.
*The cavern-loving Wren sequestered seeks
The verdant shelter of the hollow stump,
And with congenial moss, harmless deceit,
Constructs a safe abode. On topmost boughs
The glossy Raven, and the hoarse-voiced Crow,
Rocked by the storm, erect their airy nests.
The Ousel, lone frequenter of the grove
Of fragrant pines, in solemn depth of shade
Finds rest ; or 'mid the holly's shining leaves,
A simple bush the piping Thrush contents,
Though in the woodland concert he aloft
Trills from his spotted throat a powerful strain,
And scorns the humbler quire. The Lark, too, asks
A lowly dwelling, hid beneath a turf,
Or hollow, trodden by the sinking hoof ;
Songster of Heaven ! who to the Sun such lays
Pours forth, as Earth ne'er owns. Within the hedge
The Sparrow lays her sky-stained eggs. The barn,
With eaves o'er pendant, holds the chattering tribe :
Secret the Linnet seeks the tangled copse :
The white Owl seeks some antique ruined wall,
Fearless of rapine ; or in hollow trees,
Which age has caverned, safely courts repose :
The thievish Pie, in twofold colours clad,
Roofs o'er her curious nest with firm-wreathed twigs,
And sidelong forms her cautious door."*

—BIDLAKE.

"They (birds) act not by any Art, neither do they enquire, neither do they deliberate about what they do."—
ARISTOTLE.

APRIL NINETEENTH.—This is Primrose Day. “They are so well known that they need no description,” writes Culpeper in his delightful old *Herbal*. “Of the leaves of primroses is made as fine a salve to heal wounds as any I know; make this as you are taught, and do not (you that have ingenuity in you) see your poor neighbours go with wounded limbs when a halfpenny cost will heal them.”

*“Early the Primroses, first of Flow’rs appears,
And sweetly from her broad green mantle rears
Her Bloom of purest White, yet oft her Face
Adorn’d with Blushes takes a various Grace.”*

—RAPIN.

Bacon writes of “Prime Roses,” and Chaucer of “Primerolles.” “The ladye of the springe—The lovely flower that first doth show her face.” Forbes Watson, in his book, *Flowers and Garden*, gives a most beautiful description of the Primrose: “The flower is of a most unusual colour, a pale delicate yellow slightly tinged with green. . . . And we must not overlook the little round stigma, that green and translucent gem, which forms the pupil of the eye, and is surrounded by a deeper circle of orange, which helps it to shine forth more clearly. Many flowers have a somewhat pensive look, but in the pensiveness of the Primrose there is a shade of melancholy—a melancholy, however, which awakens no thought of sadness, and does but give interest to the pale, sweet, inquiring faces which the plant upturns towards us. . . . In the Primrose we cannot help being struck by an exceeding softness and delicacy.”

APRIL TWENTIETH.

ON THE MARTLET.

" . . . That guest of Summer,
The temple-haunting Martlet, doth approve,
By her loved masonry, that Heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here : no jutting frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but the bird
Hath made her pendant bed and procreant cradle,
Where they most breed and haunt I have observed
The air is delicate, is soft, is pure."

—SHAKESPEARE.

" Hark !
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy carw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold ;
White-plum'd lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep ;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin ;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest."

—KEATS.

*APRIL TWENTY-FIRST.**THE WOOD WARBLER.*

To some of our woodland districts a small bird comes every year from over the sea, which resembles the Chiff-chaff in size, but is of a much greener colour; this is the Wood Warbler. Unlike the Chiff-chaff, who is our earliest spring visitor, the Wood Wren is the very latest warbler to arrive, and is not often heard until the third week in April has well begun. The song of this little bird, which is given off from a full-grown tree, is of two distinct parts: a single sweet but melancholy note repeated some six or eight times in three or four seconds, and a harsh loud trill, during the execution of which his whole body seems to shake, and every feather to vibrate; it is this shaking which has earned for the Wood Warbler the curious title of "the shaker of the woods." In the late summer all that is heard of this bird is a soft single note repeated at intervals of half a minute or so. Though the song of the Wood Wren is pure and unvaried, yet, sad though it be, it is welcomed by us in the deeper parts of our woods where all else is still, and where, but for the rush of a scared rabbit, Nature seems asleep.

The nest is domed, and is made of grass and moss with a few dried leaves. It is placed on the ground in a wood where the herbage gives good cover.

APRIL TWENTY-SECOND.

*“The Jonquil loads with potent breath the air,
And rich in golden glory nods; there, too,
Child of the wind, Anemone delights;
Or in its scarlet robe of various dyes,
Ranunculus, reflecting every ray;
The Polyanthus, and with prudent head
The Crown Imperial, ever bent on earth,
Favouring her secret rites and pearly sweets.”*

I have found a curious note about the anemone in *Nature Display'd*. Monsieur Bachelieu, a famous florist, first brought the anemone to Paris in the seventeenth century.

“He lived ten years, without imparting, to any Person, the least Fibre of the double Anemones, or one Seed of the single Flowers. A Counsellor of the Parliament, who was displeased to see one Man engross a Benefit that was qualified by Nature to be common, made him a Visit at his Seat; and as he past by his Anemones that were then in Seed, he artfully let his Robe fall upon the Down of the Flowers and it swept off several of the little Grains. His Servant, who had been instructed how to act, immediately caught up the Robe, and folded it over the Seeds that had fasten'd to it. The next year, the Counsellor shar'd the Produce of his innocent Theft, among his Friends, and by their agency, imparted it to all Europe.”

APRIL TWENTY-THIRD.—St. George's Day. His emblem, a Rose.

Alas ! my roses will not bloom in my rosary in April, and I will not, even for St. George, wear an artificial one in my gown. I have dedicated to-day to the Tulip, because they outline my lawn like scarlet sentinels in the green grass, and literally shine in the sun against a white wall of *laurus tinus*. I have just looked up "Tulip" in Gerard. Here is what I find :—

Tulip—or the Dalmatian Cap. "A strange and forrein floure. I do verily thinke that these are the Lillies of the field mentioned by our Saviour. The reasons that induce me to think thus, are these ; First, their shape : for their floures resemble Lillies ; and in these places whereas our Saviour was conversant they grew wilde in the fields. Secondly, the infinite varietie of colour, which is to be found more in this than any other sort of Floure. And thirdly, the wondrous beauty and mixtures of these floures. This is my opinion, and these my reasons, which any may either approve of or gainsaye, as he shall thinke good."

In an old *Herball*, 1659, I find endless varieties of Tulips : "Timely-flowring," "apple-bloome," "yellow dwafe," "red and yellow fooles coat," "late yellow with sanguine spots," &c., &c. "The roots preserved with sugar, or other wise dressed, become good and nourishing meat." How I would that Tulips could take the place of Legs of Mutton !

APRIL TWENTY-FOURTH.—Daffodil Day ! How the poets love this flower !

*“ Daffodilla, came next, was a gaudy Miss,
With a yellow vest and a green gown ;
She stooped and she gave Hyacinthia a kiss,
And nodded her jealous head down !
For she viewed her fair rival step up by her side,
Scylla gracefully vested in blue,
Whom Narcissus would surely have picked for his bride,
When bathed in the morning dew.”* (1822.)

That is such a pretty description of the procession of flowers in spring. I think every one must know Herrick's poem, “To Daffodills,” but nevertheless I note it here.

*“ Faire Daffodills, we weep to see
You haste away so soone ;
As yet the early-rising Sun
Has not attain'd his Noone.
Stay, stay,
Untill the hasting day
Has run
But to the Even-song ;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.*

*We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring ;
As quick a growth to meet Decay,
As you, or any thing.
We die,
As your hours doe, and drie
Away,
Like to the Summers raine ;
Or as the pearles of Mornings dew,
Ne'r to be found againe.”*

APRIL TWENTY-FIFTH.

*“In sweet April, the messenger to May
When boonie drops, do melt in golden showres ;
When every byrde, records his lovers lay,
And western windes, do foster forth our flowres,
Late in an even, I walked out alone,
To heare the descant of the Nightingale.”*

So writes Gascoigne in the long ago. Over three hundred years ago ! In this poem the Nightingale is angry with all the other birds. She says the Thrastle “makes the wood to ring with shryching loud,” the Mavis “whose notes are nothing cleare.” She mentions Tom Tyttimouse, “so much set by.” The Finche, “which singeth never a note but peepe.” I presume this is the Bullfinch. The Lennet and the Larke, the Brandlet, Canara byrds, and Goldfinches. Then the Nightingale mentions, “The tatling Aube doth please some fancie wel.” Nobody knows what bird the Aube is. I have consulted endless authorities and gain no really satisfactory answer. I own to a great desire to know what the Aube is. As if it matters in the very least ! “And some like best the Bird as black as cole.” Some, alas ! would “rather praise, the chattering of the pie, Than her to singe, with breast against a pricke.” “Nay let them go, to marke the Cuckowes talke, The jangling Jay for that becomes them wel.”

*“And in the silent night then let them walke
To hear the Owl, how she doth shryche and yel.”*

I cannot tell why the Nightingale should be so jealous of all other birds, for Phylomene has held her own century after century. Poets sing her praises, and her song is unrivalled, so we wonder why Gascoigne should picture her thus.

APRIL TWENTY-SIXTH.—We have had a glorious rainbow arching the garden, and through the rain the sun shone brilliantly. The old proverb says, “If it rain when the Sun shine, the devil is beating his grandmother.” “Where do the rainbows go to, mother?” asks the child at my knee. An unanswerable question enough!

*“The Rainbowe bending in the skye,
Bedeckte with sundrye bewes,
Is like the seate of God on hye,
And seemes to tell these newes :
That as thereby he promised,
To drowne the world no more,
So by the blood which Christ hath shed,
He will our helth restore.”*

So wrote Gascoigne, who died in 1577.

There is *nothing* which appeals to the imagination so much as a rainbow. The marvellous colour, the sudden glorious appearance, and gradual disappearance. Fading away into another world. The splendid result of sunshine on raindrops, which is a lesson in itself.

*“My heart leaps up when I behold
A Rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a Man ;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die !
The Child is Father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be,
Bound each to each by natural piety.”*

—WORDSWORTH.

APRIL TWENTY-SEVENTH.

AN APRIL DAY.

*"When the warm sun, that brings
Seed-time and harvest, has returned again,
'Tis sweet to visit the still wood, where springs
The first flower of the plain.*

.

*From the Earth's loosened mould
The sapling draws its sustenance and thrives ;
Though stricken to the heart with winter's cold,
The drooping tree revives.*

*The softly-warbled song
Comes from the pleasant woods, and coloured wings
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves along
The forest openings.*

.

*Sweet April!—many a thought
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed ;
Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn brought,
Life's golden fruit is shed."*

—LONGFELLOW.

*"Blue eyebright ! loveliest flower of all that grew
In flower-loved England ! Flower whose hedge-side gaze
Is like an infant's ! What heart does not know
Thee, cluster'd smiler of the bank, where plays
The sunbeam on the emerald snake, and strays
The dazzling rill, companion of the road."*

Germander speedwell, Eyebright, Paul's betony, Fluellin,
Honour and Praise, pretty old-fashioned names.

APRIL TWENTY-EIGHTH.—Perilla, here is a verse I have found for thee which I know thou wilt love. With thee tears and laughter sport hand in hand. These lines were written before 1577.

*“The mistie clouds that fall sometime,
And overcast the skyes,
Are like to troubles of our times,
Which do but dymme our eyes ;
But as suche dewes are dried up quite,
When Phæbus shewes his face,
So are such fansies put to flighte,
Where God doth guide by grace.”*

So I see that thy tears are lost in the sunshine of thy joyous life. Here is a madrigal written in 1614, which I always think would be written to such as thee by some love-sick lad. Tell me when thou writest next time whether thou hast received such a song thyself.

*“See where my love a-maying goes,
With sweet Dame Flora sporting !
She most alone with nightingales
In woods delights consorting.
Turn again, my dearest !
The pleasant'st air's in meadows :
Else by the rivers let us breathe,
And kiss among the willows.”*

I quite agree with the swain ; the air is freer in the meadows where the king-cups grow. In the long ago, Perilla, some one gave me king-cups. It was in the spring-time of love, and I tell thee in the afterglow of living the king-cups are as golden now, and love as true.

APRIL TWENTY-NINTH.

PRIMROSES IN THE HOSPITAL.

*"Pink fingers busy 'mid the flowers,
She made a chain to wile the hours,
Pale Primroses upon her bed
She made a wreath for her sweet head.*

*In hospital the long spring day
On little bed her body lay,
Her spirit roamed the woods among,
And danced her little feet along.*

*With a long sigh of deep content,
'Mong the flowers her head she bent ;
Then with quick glance all full of glee
She threw her flowers over me.*

*'I'm in the wood,' she said at last,
I'm running, oh ! so fast, so fast !
I'm holding by my primrose chain,
It draws me all along the lane.*

*My chain it binds me to the sun,
It makes me dance, and sing, and run,
What matter that in bed I'm laid,
The real me is in primrose glade.'"*

—LILIAN PEARCE.

APRIL THIRTIETH.—"As soon as the return of Spring begins to invite Man to go forth into the Fields, the Earth with officious Haste seems pleas'd to deck herself in her green Livery, that thus adorn'd in all her Finery and Glory, she may pay her grateful Homage and Respect at the Feet of her Master. Let me farther remark to you, that this wonderful Diversity of Plants, which you see overspreading the Face of a single Meadow, is not all for show, but each has its distinct Leaf, Flower, Beauty, and Virtue peculiar to itself. For Example, this is the Rampion, which we eat in Sallad; a little further you see the little Cresses; those which grow so common every where is the Trefoil, which together with that other call'd Balm-gentle, an Herb of a fine Flavour, and which gives Cream an exquisite Relish, are the chief Glory of the Meads; up and down you'll find the Millefoil, the Burnet, the lesser Centory, the Plantain, the little Lyricofancy, the Fumitory, the Agrimony. In taking a nearer view, methinks I discover several that I know; that, for Example, is the Pimpernel, these here are Daisies, this here has the shape and smell of Garlick, and one would take that other for Sorrell."—*Nature Display'd*, 1736.

Parkinson writes of the Crocus thus:—

"... Then in regard of their beautifull flower of several varieties, and as they have been carefully sought out, and preserved by divers, to furnish a Garden of dainty curiosity."

MAY FIRST.

*"Youths folke now flocken in everywhere
To gather May-baskets, and smelling breere ;
And home they hasten, the postes to dight,
And all the kirke pillars, ere day light,
With hawthorne buds, and sweet eglantine,
And girlonds of roses, and soppes-in-wine."*

—SPENSER.

*"The May-pole is up,
Now give us the cup ;
I'll drink to the garlands around it,
But first unto those
Whose hands wilt compose
The glory of flowers that crown'd it."*

—HERRICK.

ON MAY MORNING.

*"Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow Cowslip and the pale Primrose.
Hail, bounteous May ! that dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire ;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing ;
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with an easy song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long."*

—MILTON.

*"It is a Custom established among many People, for
Lovers to plant a green Tree before their Mistresses Doors
on the first of May."*

This is, I presume, the origin of our May Pole.

MAY SECOND.—"In May you have also an infinity of all sorts of Flowers, *Tulips*, *Stock-Gilliflowers* of all colours, *Daisies*, *Flames*, *Roses of Guldres*, *Peonies* both of the *Flesh* or *Carnation*, and of the *very red* Colours, *Musked White Stock Gilli-Flowers*, both single and double, that is to say the *Julians*, As likewise *Columbines*, *Veronica's* or *Fluellins* and others."—*The Compleat Gard'ner*, 1649.

Bacon gives us no particular flowers for May. This I cannot understand, and I fear me that he never heard the throbbing of the heart of Spring. To-day I have been reading Parkinson, and am greatly in love with his writing. He says "the delight of the varieties both of formes, colours and properties of Herbes and Flowers, hath ever been powerfull over dull, unnurtured, rusticke and savage people, led only by Nature's instinct." This is a wonderful plea for the study of Nature. He writes so charmingly of different flowers. "The Yellow Larkes spurre, the prettiest flower of a score in a garden." Of the beautiful blue Buglosse: "It groweth in all gardens, and in sandie champion countrys . . . it maketh men gladde and merie." And afterwards he pleads with us to give room in our modern parterres to herbs. "After all these faire and sweete flowers I must needes adde a few sweete herbes, both to accomplish the garden, and to please your senses, by placing them in your Nosegays, or else where, as you list." Yes, I plead, too, that you place your sweets *where you list*.



MAY

MAY THIRD.

*“ A swarm of bees in May
Is worth a load of hay ;
A swarm of bees in June
Is worth a silver spune ;
A swarm of bees in July
Is not worth a fly.”*

I hear a door-key being clanged against a frying-pan, and hastening to my window I see a swarm of bees on a bough of a knarled apple-tree in the farmer's garden. They say bees like music, also the key is a sign of proprietorship. Bees seem always to be swarming this month. Oh, the joy of living in the glad May-tide ! All the world is new and bright ; you cannot walk in my lady's wild garden without treading on the flowers, and the birdlets are peeping from every bush ; and even from the grass at the foot of the golden gorse. Wordsworth writes a sonnet on May morning. He ever goes to the heart of things.

*“ Life with you Lambs, like day, is just begun,
Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
Does joy approach ? they meet the coming tide,
And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
Pale twilight's lingering glooms and in the sun
Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied ;
Or gambol—each with his shadow at his side,
Varying its shape wherever he may run.
As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
All turn, and court the shining and the green,
Where herbs look up and opening flowers are seen,
Why to God's goodness cannot we be true ?
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new ? ”*

MAY FOURTH.—This is St. Monica's Day. I know not why I take note of it, but nevertheless she appeals to me. She was St. Augustine's mother, and we read that "he revered her memory." May all our sons do likewise!

SPRING.

*"I come, I come! Ye have called me long,
I come o'er the mountains with light and song;
Ye may trace my step on the waking earth,
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass."*

—MRS. HEMANS.

LACHRYMAL FLOWERS.

*" . . . call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparsely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers;
Being the rather Primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted Crowtoe, and pale Jessamine,
The white Pink, and the Pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing Violet,
The musk Rose, and the well attired Woodbine,
With Cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears."*

—MILTON.

"How delightful it is to live in the Country! It daily produceth something new."

MAY FIFTH.—This very day the Big Tits have taken up their abode in my window-box ; they have built their beautiful nest of orange and blue wool off my drawing-room carpet. I love to think they have an eye for colour and approve my choice, and I am glad that spring cleaning has such a happy result. They are surprisingly trusting, these birds of mine, but doubtless they feel my love. The time I like best is when the tired parents are feeding their young. They wake me in the early morning, and the work goes on all day. In *The Wisdom of God*, written by John Ray in 1680, I find the following passage :—

“Birds which feed their Young in the Nest, tho’ in all likelihood they have no ability of counting the numbers of them, should yet (tho’ they bring but one morsel of Meat at a time, and have not fewer (it may be) than seven or eight Young in the Nest together, which at the return of their Dams, do all at once with equal greediness, hold up their heads and gape) not omit or forget one of them, but feed them all ; which, unless they did carefully observe and retain in memory which they had fed, which not, were impossible to be done : This, I say, seems most strange and admirable.”

Strange indeed ! How can the parent birds know which to feed by turn ? Dear Big Tits, you get worn out ; but then why do you lay as many as thirteen eggs ? If you were content with a small family you would not have such hard work. The more to work for, the more to love, is doubtless your theory.

MAY SIXTH.—To-day I have dedicated to the Auricula ; I feel forced into this by my new acquaintance with all the old garden books. They seem to have prized this flower overmuch, and I never can make out why. Mr. Cole writes in 1657 :—

“Bears-Ear is a beautiful and brave plant, with slender round stemme an handful high, bearing a tuft of flowers at the top.” In *Nature Display’d* there are pages about the Auricula. “This flower has several Qualities which entitle it to our Esteem. We admire the Vivacity of its Colours ; the Agreeableness of its Perfume ; the Variety of its Kinds, and the Duration of its Clusters : And tho’ the finest of the Species disappear before the close of Spring, here are some that still preserve an engaging Aspect ; and there are others which continue to the Summer Season. . . . Those that imitate the Gloss of Satin and Velvet, have the first Rank allotted to them by the Curious. A few Irregularities of Growth give them an agreeable Variety ; you may observe some, whose Cups rise one above another, in two or three Stages ; but this is rather an imperfect Arrangement, than any real Beauty.” According to Gerard this flower has indeed a marvellous quality. Listen, I pray you. “Those that hunt in the Alps and high mountaines after goats and bucks, do highly esteeme this floure, by reason of the singular effects that it hath, but (as I said before) one especially, even in that it preventeth the losse of their best joynts (I meane their neckes) if they take the roots thereof before they ascend the rocks or other high places.” After this I feel I can say no more !

MAY SEVENTH.—“Thanks to the returning Spring, and the new Bloom of Flowers, all the Landskip around me is extremely Charming.”

VERSES ON VEGETATION IN MAY.

*“Then let me roam the shadowy dell
Beneath her milder sky ;
Where Violets give the fragrant vale
A blue embroidery.
The while the heavens onward press,
And Flora treads the lawn,
Anon the leaves spring on the trees,
Which blossoms sweet adorn.*

*The pert Acacia’s light pea-green,
The Ash’s greyer hue,
The Larch and Fir so lively seen,
The Pine of darkening blue ;
The Oak whose boughs scarce cast a shade,
The deep Umbrageous Elm,
The Sycamore, the noble Beech,
The Mastic, and the Holm ;*

*The Aspen’s silv’ry whispering leaves,
That answer Zephyr’s sighs ;
The Chesnut, and the Æschylus,
That penetrate the skies ;
The airy Birch the forest’s beau ;
The Mountain Ash the belle ;
The Hazel copses green that show
Their new leaves in the dell.
These are the beauties in the Spring ;
And while it doth remain,
Let all the Graces dance and sing,
Till Winter come again.”*

—FOSTER’S “CALENDAR.”

MAY EIGHTH.—We have discovered a chiff-chaff's nest in the rhododendron. Here is Clare's delightful description of the same bird's nest he found :—

*“ Well ! in my many walks I’ve rarely found
A place less likely for a bird to form
Its nest—close by the rut-gull’d wagon road,
And in the almost bare foot-trodden ground,
With scarce a clump of grass to keep it warm !
Where not a thistle spreads its spears abroad,
Or prickly bush, to shield it from harm’s way ;
And yet so snugly made, that none may spy
It out, save peradventure. You and I
Had surely pass’d it in our walk to-day,
Had chance not led us to it ! Nay, e’en now,
Had not the old bird heard us trampling by,
And flutter’d out, we had not seen it lie
Brown as the roadway side. Small bits of hay
Pluck’d from the old propt haystack’s bleachy brow
And wither’d leaves, make up its outward wall,
Which from the gnarl’d oak-dotterel yearly fall,
And in the old hedge-bottom rot away.
Built like an oven,—through a little hole,
Scarcely admitting e’en two fingers in,
Hard to discern, the birds snug entrance win.
'Tis lined with feathers, warm as silken stole,
Softer than seats of down for painless ease,
And full of eggs, scarce bigger e’en than peas !
Here’s one most delicate, with spots as small
As dust, and of a faint and pinky red.
Stop, here’s the bird. That woodman at the gap
Frighten’d him from the hedge : ’tis olive green.
Well ! I declare, it is the Petty-chap !
Not bigger than the Wren and seldom seen.”*

MAY NINTH.

A GARDEN OF FLOWERS.

*"Fairhanded Spring unbosoms every grace,
Throws out the Snowdrop and the Crocus first,
The Daisy, Primrose, Violet darkly blue,
And Polyanthus of unnumbered dyes ;
The yellow Wallflower, stained with iron brown,
And lavish Stock that scents the garden round,
From the soft wing of vernal breezes shed
Anemonès, Auriculas, enriched
With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves,
And full Ranunculus of glowing red.
Then comes the Tulip race, whose beauty plays
Her idle freaks, from family diffused
To family, as flies the father dust,
The varied colours run ; and while they break
On the charmed eye, the exulting florist marks,
With secret pride, the wonders of his hand.
No gradual bloom is wanting, from the bud,
First born of Spring, to Summer's musky tribes—
Nor Hyacinths of purest virgin white,
Low bent and blushing inwards—nor Jonquils
Of potent fragrance—nor Narcissus fair,
As o'er the fabled mountain hanging still—
Nor broad Carnations, nor gay spotted Pinks,
Nor showered from every bush the damask Rose."*

—THOMSON.

I prithee read the old poets. There is a charm about them I cannot find to-day. Perhaps it is the plainness of speech I appreciate, though I pity the days that missed Browning and Tennyson ; and shall I add a longer row of names ? I have just been reading Emerson's essay on "The Poet." It has taught me much.

MAY TENTH.—It is impossible to write of anything but flowers and birds this month. All the Spanish Irises are out now. Such a brave show they make. Also the yellow Water Flag. “The water Floure-de-luce or Yellow Flag prospereth well in moist meadows, and in the borders and brinks of Rivers, ponds, and standing lakes. Although it be a watery plant of nature yet being planted in gardens it prospereth well. The root of the common Floure-de-Luce cleane washed, and stamped with a few drops of Rose-water, and laid plaister-wise upon the face of man or woman, doth in two daies at the most take away the blacknesse or blewnesse of any stroke or bruise.” This is Gerard’s description.

“O ! flower-de-luce, bloom on, and let the river
Linger to kiss thy feet !

O ! flower of song, bloom on, and make for ever
The world more fair and strong.”

—LONGFELLOW.

Again a poet writes :—

“Retiring May to lovely June

Her latest garland now resigns ;

The banks with cuckoo flowers are strewn,

The wood-walks blue with columbines ;

And with its reeds the wandering stream

Reflects the Flag-flower’s golden beam.”

In a very old *Herbal* I find “Variable Flouredeluces, Known as the common, Turkey, sea, wild Bizantine, narrow-leaved, grasse, narrow-leaved-many-flowered, white dwarfe, and variegated-dwarfe . . . the oile of the flowers and roots can be made as the oile of roses.”

MAY ELEVENTH.—How the birds sing ! The glorious Dawn Chorus wakes me every morning, and the flowers open their buds to listen, and even the butterflies stir their wings. I never heard such singing in the garden before. Surely it is a hymn to Spring ; a thanksgiving to the one who awakens the land.

“ *Up springs the Lark,*
Shrill voiced and loud, the messenger of morn ;
Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounted sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneful nations. Every copse
Deep tangled, tree irregular, and bush
Bending with dewy moisture o’er the heads
Of the coy quoristers that lodge within,
Are prodigal of harmony. The Thrush
And Woodlark, o’er the kind contending throng
Superior heard, run through the sweetest length
Of notes, when listening Philomela deigns
To let them joy, and purposes, in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
The Blackbird whistles from the thorny brake,
The mellow Bullfinch answers from the grove.
Nor are the Linnets, o’er the flowering furze
Poured out profusely, silent. Joined to these
Innumerable songsters, in the freshening shade
Of new sprung leaves, their modulations mix,
Mellifluous. The Jay, the Rook, the Daw,
And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,
Aid the full concert, while the Stock-dove breathes
A melancholy murmur through the whole.
Around our heads the white-winged Plover wheels
Her sounding flight, and then directly on,
In long excursion, skims the level lawns,
To tempt him from her nest.”

—THOMSON.

MAY TWELFTH.—Poets of all ages have extolled the song of the Nightingale, nor are their commendations undeserved. Other birds sing their sweet song in their own untutored way ; but the Nightingale is no amateur ; he sings as if he had been well taught ; he produces his notes like a professional ; and is undeniably the best of all songsters.

Nightingales, however, vary very much in their powers. There are some localities where the birds do not sing nearly so well as in others, just as in some districts the human population is far less musical than in others. The late Joseph Wolff, the great animal and bird painter, kept some half-dozen of these birds at one time, and he told me that he found that some were very much inferior to others in their powers of singing.

Nightingales are partial to certain localities, while avoiding others. It is said that they are never to be seen in Devonshire, and they are rarely heard north of the Trent. They are easily distinguished from the rest of the warblers by their reddish brown tail ; but otherwise they are inconspicuous. They build on a sunny bank and their eggs are brown ; but let us draw a cordon of love around these birds and ever leave them in peace, for we could ill spare such perfect bird music from our midst. Sweet Philomel, sing on, for we love you so. I hear no sadness in your song, but patient gladness.

MAY THIRTEENTH.

*" Oh ! there never was yet so fair a thing,
 By racing river or bubbling spring,
 Nothing that ever so gaily grew
 Up from the ground when the skies were blue,
 Nothing so brave—nothing so free
 As thou—my wild wild Cherry-tree."*

Yes, there is nothing so brave as white blossom against a cloudless dark blue sky ; when the lark is singing far away up in the blue, and the golden gorse is like a cloth of gold with linnets flitting over—

*" Here's the spring back or close,
 When the almond-blossom blows ;
 We shall have the word
 In a minor third
 There is none but the cuckoo knows :
 Heaps of the guelder-rose !
 I must bear with it, I suppose."*

—BROWNING.

Yes, we can all bear with the spring. Great beds of forget-me-nots, like little bits of sky reflected on the ground, here and there pink tulips peeping between. Lilies of the valley are in bloom ; the "Liriconfancie" of olden days. Even the broom is golden, and in the meadow by the ruins and through the wood we still gather cowslips, bluebells, and primroses. Near at hand the whitethroat is the noisiest bird ; the wryneck is with us, and to-day the fly-catcher arrived, the last of our migrants. The missel-thrushes have been chasing a rook over our field. I suppose rooks do interfere with their neighbour's nests and must be kept in order.

MAY FOURTEENTH.

*"I flattered all the beauteous country round,
 As poets use, the skies, the clouds, the fields,
 The happy violets hiding from the roads
 The primroses run down to, carrying gold ;
 The tangled hedge-rows, where the cows push out
 Impatient horns and tolerant churning mouths
 'Twixt dripping ash-boughs,—hedge-rows all alive
 With birds and gnats and large white butterflies
 Which look as if the May-flower had caught life
 And palpitated forth upon the wind !"*

—E. B. BROWNING.

And after the flowers—birds.

*"The birds around me hopped and played ;
 Their thoughts I cannot measure :—
 But the least motion that they made,
 It seemed a thrill of pleasure."*

And their nests?—I could write of nests for ever.
 This is what Addison writes :—

"What can we call the principle which directs every different kind of bird to observe a particular plan in the structure of its nest, and direct all the same species to work after the same model ? . . . To me it seems the immediate direction of Providence, and such an operation of the Supreme Being as that which determines all the portions of matter to their proper centres."

*"The jocund mirl, perch'd on the lightest spray,
 Sings his love forth, to see the pleasant May."*

"Summer is coming, is coming, is coming," and the joy of living fills the air ! "I know it, I know it, I know it." Don't you hear the throstle singing ?

MAY FIFTEENTH.—Here is a dainty description of the country in the “merry merry month of May.” The poets’ month. The month when “daisies damask every place.” The month we feel inclined to cry—

“Oh ! Father, Lord !
The All-beneficent ! I bless Thy name,
That Thou hast mantled the green Earth with flowers,
Linking our hearts to nature.”

The said dainty lines were written by G. Peele in 1585.

“Not Iris in her pride and braverie,
Adorns her arch with such varietie ;
Nor doth the milk-white way in frostie night,
Appeare so faire and beautiful in sight,
As doe these fields and groves, and sweeter bowres,
Bestrew’d, and dect with partie-coloured flowers.
Along the babbling brookes, and silver glyde,
That at the bottom doth in silence slyde,
The waterie flowers, and lilies on the bankes,
Like blazing comets, burgeon all in rankes ;
Under the hawthorn, and the poplar tree,
Where sacred Phæbe may delight to be :
The primrose, and the purple hyacinth,
The daintie violet and wholesome minthe,
The double daisie, and the cowslip, queene
Of summer flowers, do overpeere the greene :
All round about the valley as ye passe,
Ye may no see, for peeping floures, the grasse.”

So long ago as that the cowslip was loved even as we love it now. I wonder, did they make cowslip balls then ? Certainly flowers ever have been, are, and will be, a joy for ever.

MAY SIXTEENTH.—I have been plucking you a "basket" of lilies of the valley, Monica, and I lay them at your feet with my love. Did you know that one name for this dear flower is "Virgin's Tears"? but the name I love the best is "Liriconfancie." It is such an old-world name, and seems to play on one's imagination. Another name is "Convall Lilly" or May Lilly. Gerard says "it groweth on Hampstead Heath, foure miles from London, in great abundance"; also that "the floures of the Valley Lillie distilled with wine doth strengthen the memory." Would you rather remember or forget, Monica? I will not press the question; for we cannot remember the sweet without the bitter.

This dear flower of yours is also called "Lilly Constancy," which I like much too. Parkinson writes and tells us in that quaint old way of his, that, "Having filled a glasse with the flowers, and being well stopped, set it for a moneths space in an Ants hill, and after being drayned cleare set it by to use"; it will then cure the gout! Gout is very unromantic, and I utterly fail to see why it should be placed in an Ants' Hill!

I have learnt many strange things from the old *Herbals*. To-day having eaten water-cress, I am interested to hear what Culpepper says on the subject. He died in 1654.

"Water-cress pottage is a good remedy; those that would live in health may use it if they please, if they will not, I cannot help it. If any fancy not pottage, they may eat the herb as a salad."—If they will not, I cannot help it!

MAY SEVENTEENTH.

ON THE LINNET'S SONG.

*"On the hawthorn spray
The Linnet makes her temperate lay;
She haunts no solitary shade,
She flutters o'er no sunshine mead;
No lovelorn griefs depress her song,
No raptures lift it lordly high,
But soft she trills amid the ærial throng
Smooth, simple strains of soberest harmony."*

—MASON.

SPRING.

*"Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome her,
About her glance the tits, and shriek the jays,
Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,
The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,
While round her brows a woodland culver flits,
Watching her large light eyes and gracious looks,
And in her open palm a halcyon sits
Patient—the secret splendour of the brooks."*

—TENNYSON.

*"In vain to me the cowslips blow;
In vain to me the violets spring;
In vain to me in glen and shaw
The mavis and the lintwhite sing."*

—BURNS.

As the linnet sings on a common, Delia, thou should'st see the wood—

*"Sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro' the earth."*

I wish thou wert here to cull them for me; thy singing is to me ever like a bird's, full of melody, and harmony, and peace.

MAY EIGHTEENTH.

*“Let me go forth, and share
The overflowing sun
With one wise friend, or one
Better than wise, being fair,
Where the peewit wheels and dips
On heights of bracken and ling,
And earth, unto her leaflet tips,
Tingles with the spring.”*

Yes, the earth tingles with the spring indeed, and all the world is fair. There are moods best fitted to the open common “where the peewit wheels and dips,” there are moods when the stillness and quiet of a wood helps one to regain the peaceful quiet of a mind in rhyme with one’s surroundings. Moments come when all the machinery of life is out of gear, and no effort of will oils the rusty spring. Nothing avails but resting the thoughts *entirely* on the Power of Good—on God. Words are in no way needed ; prayer is only form ; effort results in failure. Only a stillness and fixing all thought on God as God, as the All in All, the Infinite, and peace gradually returns, and all is love once more.

*“Sing out thy notes on high
To sunbeam straying by
Or passing cloud ;
Heedless if thou art heard,
Sing thy full song aloud.”*

MAY NINETEENTH.—To-day is Cowslip Day, and I have a bowl of the dear flowers by my side. "Paigle," "Two in a hose," "My Lady's Keys," "Fairy Bells," "St. Peter's herb," "Cuckoo's boots," "Palsy-wort," "Petty Mullein."

*"Where the bee sucks, there lurk I:
In a cowslip bed I lie";*

and I feel I must make a Cowslip ball just for old sake's sake. The little red spots of the golden bells "these be rubies fairy favours." Ben Jonson writes of "Bright daie's eyes and lippes of coves":—

*"Cowslip bud, so early peeping,
Waren'd by April's hazard hours;
O'er thy head though sunshine's creeping,
Close the threatening tempest lowers."*

Clare always writes, too, delightfully of wild flowers; one can almost see them growing as one reads.

*"Folks tell me that the May's in flower,
That cowslip-peeps are fit to pull."*

"Cowslips! How the children love them, and go out into the fields on sunny mornings to collect them in their little baskets, and then come home and pick the pips to make sweet intoxicating wine, preserving at the same time, untouched, a bunch of the goodliest flowers as a harvest-sheaf of beauty! And then the white soft husks are gathered into balls, and tossed from hand to hand till they drop to pieces, to be trodden upon and forgotten. . . . Cowslip! The name is of ancient Saxon origin, and very appropriate if we consider it well. I have already said the plant reminds us of flocks of cattle feeding—at first sight I think of sheep and lambs more particularly." Thus writes Forbes Watson. He is right. Nothing carries me back to my childhood like a bunch of Cowslips. They are soft, and sweet, and young, and altogether happy!

MAY TWENTIETH.—Phœbe, dear, do you know it is particularly lucky for lovers to meet on this day? This will amuse you; for you love a little bit of romance, and I can fancy you a love-lorn maid wandering through the woods wondering who will cross your path. Here is a verse of an old ballad for you :—

*“Of the three Simmer months they say,
The most of luck is the twenty o’ May,
Our hearts and hands to join;
This bloom which fills the fragrant aire
Shall rest upon thy bosom faire
And thou shalt rest on mine.”*

Did you know that you ought to rise early and gather May-dew, and if you can succeed in catching a snail by the horns, and throw it over your shoulder, your good luck is secure? Also, if you place a snail on a slate, then likewise it will describe by its turning the initial of your lover’s name? Here is a madrigal written in 1601 :—

*“When Flora faire the pleasant tidings bringeth
Of summer sweete with herbes and flowers adorned,
The nightingale upon the hawthorne singeth
And Boreas’ blasts the birds and beasts have scorned;
When fresh Aurora with her colours painted,
Mingled with spears of golde, the sun appearing,
Delights the hearts that are with love acquainted,
And maying maids have then their time of cheering;
All creatures then with summer are delighted,
The beasts, the birds, the fish with scale of silver;
Then stately dames by lovers are invited
To walke the meades or row upon the river.”*

What say you? Are you pleased? Come hither with the May flowers, Phœbe, and see what Spring has in store for you.

MAY TWENTY-FIRST.—We have found a Yellow-hammer's nest. At a bramble root, sunk in the grass of wither'd field straws form'd,

*"Well lined with many a coil of hair and moss,
And in it laid five red-vein'd spheres I found."*

They say fairies write their love letters on the Yellow-hammer's eggs. He is called the "writing lark" in some places; also Yoit, Yellow Yoldrin, Yellow Bunting, and in Sweden, Goldspink. Gilbert White remarks that it persists in singing after midsummer with more steadiness than any other bird. "A lit-tle bit of bread, and no cheese."

From the lane we wandered to the bluebell wood. Oh! the blue of it! and the soft, tender green overhead!

*"The choicest buds in Flora's train let other fingers twine,
Let others snatch the damask rose or wreath the eglantine,
I'd leave the sunshine and parterre, and seek the woodland glade,
To stretch me on the fragrant bed of bluebells in the shade."*

*Let others cull the daffodil, the lily soft and fair,
And deem the tulip's gaudy cup most beautiful and rare;
But give to me, oh, give to me the coronal that's made
Of ruby orchids mingled with the bluebells in the shade."*

*The sunflower and the peony, the poppy bright and gay,
Have no alluring charms for me; I'd fling them all away.
Exotic bloom may fill the vase, or grace the high-born maid,
But sweeter far to me than all are bluebells in the shade."*

These are pretty, quaint old verses. At the same time, bluebells in the shade are nothing to bluebells in the sunlight which glints through the trees.

MAY TWENTY-SECOND.

THE GREEN LINNET.

*"Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.*

*One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Then, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.*

*Amid yon tuft of hazel trees
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet, seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.*

*My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes."*

—WORDSWORTH.

MAY TWENTY-THIRD.—Prithee, this is Lilac-tide. All the world is young, and the joy of living rises with the sap, and trees, and flowerets, and birds hear the throbbing of the heart of Spring. Some spirit stirs under the brown earth, and soft green leaves unfurl with brave gentleness. All the bare loneliness of Winter is behind, all the bloom of Summer before. Birds come to us for nesting; they, too, feel the gladness in the air. What memories the scent of lilac bloom brings to our heart! The spring-time of youth comes again in a dream with the passion of loving and the pain of parting, and the splendid joy of living. But with the passing years true lasting happiness comes, and we learn patience and know for certain that after Winter comes Spring.

*“Oh were my love yon lilac fair,
Wi’ purple blossoms in the spring,
And I a bird, to shelter there
When wearied on my little wing.*

*How would I mourn when it was torn
By autumn wild and winter rude!
But I would sing on wanton wing
When youthful May its bloom renewed.”*

—BURNS.

I do not read of lilac in the old *Herbals*. Ah! well, in some things we see with different eyes now, and it is well that it is so. The study of flowers was a duty in the old days: now it is a delight. I love to bury my face in a bunch of lilac bloom, and when nobody sees me but flowers, to imprint a kiss for old sake’s sake.

MAY TWENTY-FOURTH.

A SONG OF SPRING.

*“Through the wood he came, singing
A woodland song,
Through the wood blithely singing
He walked along;
Through the wood he came, singing
Songs without words,
Through the wood madly singing
A song of birds.*

*Through the wood he came singing
By leafy bowers,
Through the wood sweetly singing
A song of flowers.
Near he came, and I sitting
In my room,
A ray of sunlight brighten’d
All the gloom.*

*As through the wood I heard him
Nearer come,
Sunlight dancing and filling
All my home.
Through the wood he came singing
One day in spring,
He brought the warmth and gladness
To everything.*

*My heart, in lonely sorrow,
Leaped and sang,
All the woods to his singing
An echo rang.
Through the wood he came bringing
Sunshiny hours,
And when he left me, my hands
Were filled with flowers.”*

—LILIAN PEARCE.

MAY TWENTY-FIFTH.—This month and next I feel I must write of the nightingale's song. As we walk along the lanes at eventide they sing so perfectly. I do not call the nightingale's song sad. His breast is not against a thorn.

*"O Nightingale! thou sure art
A Creature of a fiery heart;—
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song of mockery and despise
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves."*

—WORDSWORTH.

*"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk;
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease."*

—KEATS.

"Homer spoke of the tawny nightingale, that complains in leafy shades; Horace calls it the sad, grief-stricken bird, love-lorn bird; and in later years Petrarch represented it as lamenting, and Tasso as deploring; and from the Troubadours might be selected abundant passage, in which a bird was singing the saddest of songs."

MAY TWENTY-SIXTH.—ST. AUGUSTINE'S DAY.

THE horse-chestnut is coming into bloom, but the oak leaflets are still brown, and the ash scarcely green as yet. But the yellow and white broom is coming into flower, and so are the spiræas. The rockery is blue with gentians and periwinkles and gold with yellow alysium.

*"The fields and gardens were beset
With tulips, crocus, violet;
And now, though late, the modest rose
Did more than half a blush disclose."*

The Titmice are rather in a scolding humour, for they have their nests to look after; but the ox-eye still has his double note. Of all the birds the lesser whitethroat sings the most outside the garden, and the garden warbler inside. I have heard the turtle-dove purring, just over the little gate where the starlings are feeding their young and scolding all who come near. Incessant scold, scold, scold, just as if we want to interfere in any way. They really might know us, and trust us, by now; for they have built in the same box for years. We have just heard from an eye-witness of a woodcock flying to the feeding grounds with a young bird in its feet, so that story is not a myth. Jays are being hunted all over the place by little birds. I suppose they disturb the nests, and eat the eggs, and make themselves thoroughly objectionable. Certainly bird life is most interesting at this time of the year. All the green is so fresh, and laurels and fir-trees are tipped with soft green shoots. The bees are humming madly over the garden.

MAY TWENTY-SEVENTH.—Every book I take up brings some sweet thought for spring-time. Autumn and winter do not appeal to the poet's heart in the same way. It is not that I am surprised. Spring *thrills* one as no other season can. The white blossom, ferns unfurled, the soft blush over the woods, the nest in the laurels.

*"This is a spray the Bird clung to,
 Making it blossom with pleasure,
 Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
 Fit for her nest and her treasure.
 Oh, what a hope beyond measure
 Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet hung to,—
 So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!"*

—BROWNING.

Then again Tennyson all through his poems brings a breath of Spring as we turn the pages.

*"Look, look, how he flits,
 The fire-crowned king of the wrens, from out of the pine!
 Look how they tumble the blossom, the mad little tits!
 'Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!' was ever a May so fine?"*

I can see the blossom falling from my window, yet I cannot blame the mad little tits. The bullfinches have spoilt the mespilus trees, and we say over and over again that they must all be destroyed. But "Was ever a May so fine?" Cuck-oo, Cuck-oo.

MAY TWENTY-EIGHTH.—We have a Black-cap's nest in the rhododendron, and he is singing more beautifully than ever. I find this description of him in our own "Bird Notes":—

The Black-cap may deservedly be placed amongst the best of our British songsters, but owing to the difficulty of providing him with suitable food, he is (luckily) rarely met with in captivity, and therefore is not so well known as he should be, though there is scarcely a garden of any pretension in these islands where his voice may not be heard from morn till eve during the few months that he is with us. The song of the Black-cap is quite brilliant, and though he does undoubtedly chatter a good deal at times among the bushes, the full notes are loud, clear, and beautifully sweet, and the song almost attains to the dignity of a tune. So intermittent is he in his singing that it is said he even sings when on his nest, and engaged in taking his turn with his mate in the tedious process of incubation. In colour the Black-cap resembles many other warblers, being brown, with a light breast; but the male bird is easily distinguished by the darker colouring of the head, a veritable black cap, from which he takes his name. The nest, which is made of roots and fine tendrils, is a slight-looking structure, and is generally placed from two to three feet above the ground. The eggs, only four, are covered all over with small brown spots.

Gilbert White says, "The note of the Black-cap has such a wild sweetness that it always brings to my mind those lines in a song of Shakespeare:—

*"And tune his merry note
Unto the wild bird's throat."*

MAY TWENTY-NINTH.—"How do the blackbird and thrassel, with their melodious voices, bid welcome to the cheerful spring, and in their fixed months warble forth such ditties as no art or instrument can reach to?"

"Nay, the smaller birds also do the like in their particular seasons, as, namely, the leverock, the titlark, the little linnet, and the honest robin, that loves mankind both alive and dead.

"But the nightingale (another of my airy creatures) breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, 'Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music upon earth?'"—Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*.

*"Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparrowhawk wheel'd along."*

—TENNYSON.

*"And now the mirthful quires with their full open throats,
Unto the joyful morn so strain their warbling notes,
That hills and vallies ring, and even the echoing air,
Seems all composed of songs about them everywhere."*

—DRAYTON.

MAY THIRTIETH.—The Judas-tree is in flower. "This is the tree whereon Judas did hang himself; and not upon the elder-tree, as it is said," writes Gerard. Parkinson writes in 1640: "We have no other English name to call it by than Judas-tree, until some other can impose a more apt for it." The Castilians call it *Arbold Amor*, Tree of Love. The flowers come out long before the leaves, and the mad, bad little Tits are fond of the flowers and feast thereon.

Bee Flowers.—"Many of them are very pleasant to behold, and, if they be planted in a convenient place, will abide some time in Gardens, so that there is much pleasure taken in them: I shall intrude some of them for curiositie's sake, to make up the prospect of nature's beautifull variety, and only entreate of a few, leaving the rest to a more ample declaration."—PARKINSON.

"Flie orchis begining and end of Maie. Butterflie, Humble-bee, Spotted birds, Souldiers, Souldier's cullions, Small gnat, and many other kindes."

*"Au mois de Mai
Il faudrait qu'il ne plût jamais."*

*"I often heard her say
That she liked posies;
In the last month of May
I gave her roses."*

MAY THIRTY-FIRST.—The lark struck the first note in the glorious Dawn Chorus this morning at three o'clock.

*“ Good speed, for I this day
Betimes my Mattins say :
Because I doe
Begin to wooe :
Sweet singing Lark,
Be thou the Clark,
And know thy when
To say, Amen.
And if I prove
Blest in my love ;
Then thou shalt be
High-Priest to me,
At my returne,
To Incense burne ;
And so to solemnize
Love’s, and my Sacrifice.”*

Herrick writes thus ; in fact all poets lay a tribute at the Shrine of the Lark. Wordsworth and Shelley have written rival poems on this bird.

*“ Chanter by heaven attracted, whom no bars
To daylight known, deter from that pursuit,
'Tis well that some sage instinct, when the stars
Come forth at evening, keeps thee still and mute ;
For not an eyelid could to sleep incline
Wert thou among them singing as they shine.”*

There is an old proverb in common use in the country—

*“ When the lark is mounted high
He drives the clouds from out the sky.”*

To be up with the lark is a lesson enforced on us since childhood, and nothing is more beautiful than the outpouring of song right up—up—up in the blue.

JUNE FIRST.

JUNE. "THE COMPLEAT GARD'NER," 1649.

Pansies, Larks Heels, Julians, Fraxilenes, or Fraxinellas, or Bastard Dittanies, Roses, Matricarias, or Feather-fews, Calves-snouts, of Jassee Flowers of two colours, double Coqueriers, Toute Bonnes, or Algoods, &c.

From Bacon's Essay :—

"In *June* come Pincks of all sorts, Specially the Blush Pincke ; Roses of all kinds, except the Muske, which comes later ; Hony-Suckles ; Strawberries ; Buglosse ; Columbine ; The French Mary-gold ; Figges in Fruit ; Flos Africanus ; Cherry-tree in fruit ; Ribes ; Raspes ; Vine flowers ; Lavender in Flowers ; the Sweet Satyrian, with the White Flower ; Herba Muscaria ; Lilium Convallium ; the Apple Tree in Blossom."

Methinks me that Bacon was not over-careful when he made himself this list of flowers. I could make thee a list worthier of June, and worthier the Prince's garden of thirty acres. I would name thee Syringa with its wealth of scent, Blue Veronica, the Fluellin of olden days, Orange-red azalias, soft mauve Wisteria, Eastern poppies a perfect blaze of glory, lupins, blue and white, cornflowers and wigelia. Laburnums, too, and irises. These and many more I catch glimpses of through my window as I write. Perchance thou wilt say I am jealous of the "figges in fruit." I care not ; if we have no fruit, we have the more birds, and our garden is a Garden of Peace for them



JUNE

JUNE SECOND.

*"And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ears lays;
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf or a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
A-tilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice year of Nature which song is the best?"*

*Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it."*

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

JUNE THIRD.

*“Summer is ycomen in,
Loud sing Cuckoo ;
Groweth seed,
And bloweth meade,
And springeth the weed newe.”*

Yes, friend Cuckoo is not a bit out of tune,

*“When the Sun is in the West,
Sinking slow behind the trees,
And the Cuckoo, welcome guest,
Softly woos the evening breeze.”*

That is the time I love to hear the Cuckoo. At evening, when the sun sets behind the firs, and the weir makes a soft whisper in the vale, and the earth is still hot, and the cricket plays hide-and-seek in the dry grass over my feet. Then the Cuckoos answer one another, and all the world is at peace.

EVENING VOLUNTARY.

*“The Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire,
Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
Prelude of night’s approach with soothing dreams.
Look round ;—of all the clouds not one is moving ;
'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
. . . Whate’er the path there mortal feet may trace,
Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere
Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear ;
Glad to expand ; and, for a season, free
From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee !”*

—WORDSWORTH.

JUNE FOURTH.—Spring is here and summer is here, and all the world is fair, and all the flowers bursting into bloom. Oh, the joy of it! Oh, to see the sunshine! Oh, to hear the birds!

*"Call with sweet whisper, in each gale that blows,
The slumbering Snowdrop from her long repose;
Charm the pale Primrose from her clay-cold bed,
Unveil the bashful Violet's tremulous head,
Whilst from the bud the playful Tulip breaks,
And young Carnations peep with blushing cheek."*

Yes, so it is. The *real* spring flowers have come and gone, yet all the garden is fair.

*"Laburnum rich
In streaming gold; syringa ivory pure,
The scentless and the scented Rose: this red
And of a humbler growth, the other tall,
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighbouring cypress or more sable yew,
Her silver globes, light as the foaming surf,
That the wind severs from the broken surf."*

I love to call Laburnum "Golden rain." We do not give flowers pretty names nowadays. If you chance on any old book you will note what poetic names they gave in the olden days. Some auriculas were called "Royal Widow," "Love's Master," "Marveille du Monde," "Honour and Glory"; again carnations I find had for names "Camber-sine," "Gredeline," "Primelo," "Dainty Lady," and many others. Roses nowadays have such ugly names. To my mind a rosary is spoilt by the labels. This work-a-day world but needs be seasoned by romance, and I run the gauntlet of being called sentimental because folks are apt to grow commonplace, and want courage to own they live in the World Beautiful.

JUNE FIFTH.

OLD SPELLS.

- "As peascods once I pluck'd, I chanced to see
One that was closely fill'd with three times three,
Which when I crop'd I safely home convey'd,
And o'er the door the spell in secret laid."*
- "This Lady-fly I take from off the Grass,
Whose spotted back might scarlet red surpass,
Fly, Lady-Bird, North, South, East, or West,
Fly where the man is found that I love best."*
- "I pare this pippin round and round again,
My sweetheart's name to flourish in the plain.
I fling th' unbroken paring o'er my head,
Upon the grass a perfect . . . is seen."*
- "A pippin shall another trial make,
See from the core two kernels brown I take ;
This on my cheek for . . . is sworn,
And . . . for t'other side is borne.
But . . . soon drops upon the ground,
A certain token that his love's unsound,
While . . . sticks firmly to the last ;
Oh ! were his lips to mine but join'd so fast !"*
- "Two hazel-nuts I threw into the flame,
And to each nut I gave a sweetheart's name :
This with the loudest bounce me sore amaz'd,
That in a flame of brightest colour blaz'd ;
As blaz'd the nut, so may thy passion grow,
For 'twas thy nut that did so brightly glow."*

—GAY.

JUNE SIXTH.—"Where glows the Golden Broom." In our wild garden, of course. The field is all gold with "the brave yellow flowers" which Gerard describes so well. He tells us that "That worthy Prince of famous memory *Henry 8* King of England, was wont to drinke the distilled water of Broome floures." I presume it was "Tempered with hony of Roses." Here is a recipe from *A Queen's Delight* :—

"TO PICKLE BROOM BUDS.

"Take your Buds before they be yellow on the top, make a Brine of Vinegar and Salt, which you must do only by shaking it together till the Salt be melted, then put in your Budds and keep stirred on in a day till they be sunk within the Vinegar, be sure to keep close covered. 1656."

In Surrey broom is considered very unlucky, and at first the country folk were filled with dismay when I picked bundles of it to adorn the house. I will not allow that any of God's flowers are unlucky; they are far too beautiful; and even Branches of May can be carried across my threshold.

BROOM-FLOWER.

"*Am I not
In truth a favour'd plant?
On me such bounty summer showers,
That I am cover'd o'er with flowers;
And when the frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay,
That you might look on me and say—
'This plant can never die.'*"

—WORDSWORTH.

JUNE SEVENTH.—Very few of our Spring visitors can rival the Garden Warbler in song, and if this bird is not so much appreciated, or so well known as he should be, it is through no fault of his, but rather because, though not rare, he is yet uncommon, and when heard is often mistaken for the Black-cap. This mistake is the more unaccountable because the two songs are really not at all alike. While that of the Black-cap is clear and measured in cadence, that of the Garden Warbler is a confused tumult of notes, so rapidly poured forth as to be almost indistinguishable from one another ; but this fault is more than compensated for by their extreme richness.

In tone, perhaps, the notes of the Garden Warbler resemble in some degree those of the Blackbird, but it is all hurry and rush ; there is evidently not a moment to spare ; it is a running, bubbling torrent of sound, and so far as pace goes is an exact contrast to the Blackbird, who, sitting quietly on a branch, sings sentence after sentence with a measured interval between each, as if waiting for applause.

Even where the Garden Warbler is common he is very rarely seen, for he loves the sheltering cover of thick well-leaved shrubs, where he can sing in peace undisturbed by the impertinent gaze of man. The nest, which is rather a loose structure, is built of grass and small roots. Sometimes a little moss is mixed in, and lined with wool or horse hair ; here four or five eggs are laid.

JUNE EIGHTH.—Here is George Gascoigne's description of a nightingale's song, written in 1575 :—

*“ But such a lively song (now by this light)
Yet never hearde I such another note.
It was (thought me) so pleasant and so plaine,
Orphæus’ harpe, was never halfe so sweete,
Tereu, Tereu, and thus she ’gan to plaine,
Most piteously, which made my hart to greeve ;
Her second note was fy, fy, fy, fy, fy,
And that she did in pleasant wise repeate,
With sweete reports, of heavenlie harmonie,
But yet it seem’d, her gripes of grief were greate
For when she had, so soong and taken breath,
Then should you heare, her heavy hart so throbbe,
As though it had bene overcome with death,
And yet alwayes, in every sigh and sobbe,
She shewed great skil, for times of unisone,
Her Jug, Jug, Jug, (in grieve) had such a grace.
Then stinted she, as if her song were done.
And ere that past, not ful a furlong space,
She ’gan againe, in melodie to melt,
And many a note, she warbled wondrous wel.
Yet can I not (although my hart should melt)
Remember al, which her sweete song did tel.
But one strange note, I noted with the rest
And that said thus : Nêmesis, Nêmesis,
The which me thought, came boldly from her brest,
As though she blamde, (thereby) something amisse.”*

It would be hard indeed in these days to write a better description of Philomela's song. Any one who has listened intently to the notes of a nightingale can appreciate to the full Gascoigne's lines written in the long ago.

JUNE NINTH.

*“Blessed be God for flowers !
For the bright, gentle, holy thoughts they breathe
From out their odorous beauty, like a wreath
Of sunshine on life’s hours !”*

Oh ! the flowers to-day ! I bid them live for ever in my Kalendar. All the field is still a sheet of golden broom ; the branches are bending beneath the burden of bloom ; it is a wonderful sight indeed, and I can hardly write for the beauty of it. In the garden Laburnum and Wisteria are hanging their heads, and one wall is a tangled mass of rosy Longworth Rambler and trusses of Rêve d’or roses. They are peeping in at the windows, whispering news of summer. The orange azalea is on fire between the dark trees, and the flower of the holly is lying thick on the ground like a white sheet. All the shrubs and trees are tipped with pale green shoots. Life is everywhere, and all the year is young ! As for the birds, they are nesting on the house and all over the garden. The black-cap sings by day and the nightingale by night ; while the night-jar whirrs, and in the sunshine lapwings dip over the fields in flight. We have two boxes on one tree, starlings above, and wrynecks below ; and cuckoo, the scamp, is very noisy. Hedges are white with May, and horse-chestnuts are covered with their “white candles.” I cannot write on a day like this. My heart sings to the blue distance, and I fain would wander here and there and *touch* the flowers, for I love them so.

JUNE TENTH.—There is sweetness in a summer shower, and the flowers are glad and lift their tired heads again. Clare describes it in a way few poets do.

*“Sweet it was to mark the flower,
Raindrops glist’ning on its head,
Perking up beneath the bower,
As if rising from the dead.*

*And full sweet it was to look,
How clouds misted o’er the hill,
Raindrops how they dimp’d the brook,
Falling fast and faster still.”*

Then again :—

*“And upon the dripping ground,
As the shower had ceas’d again,
As the eye was wandering round,
Trifling troubles caus’d a pain ;
Overtaken in the shower,
Bumble-bees I wander’d by,
Clinging to the drowking flower,
Left without the power to fly.”*

“Drowking,” I would have you know, means “drooping.”

*“Sweet the birds did chant their songs,
Blackbird, linnet, lark, and thrush ;
Music from a many tongues
Melted from each dripping bush ;
Deafen’d echo, on the plain,
As the sunbeams broke the cloud,
Scarce could help repeat the strain,
Nature’s anthem flow’d so loud.”*

JUNE ELEVENTH.—ST. BARNABAS.

“ON the festival of S. Barnabas garlands of Roses and Woodruff used to be worn ; girls used to be paid for gathering them, and they were so paid out of the parish accounts, like the payment for ribands on Trinity Sunday.”

“For Rose Garlands, and wood-rowe garlandis, on St. Barnebes day, x.jd.” (reign of Edward IV.).

*“Barnaby Bright, Barnaby Bright,
The longest day and the shortest night.”*

S. Barnabies Thistle begins now to flower. Gerard thus describes it. It “is another kinde of Star-Thistle, notwithstanding it hath prickles no where save in the head only, and the prickles stand forth of it in manner of a star : the stalks are two cubits high, parted into divers branches softer than are those of Star-Thistle : which stalkes have velms or thin skins cleaving unto them all in length, by which they seem to be foure square. The leaves are somewhat long, set with deep gashes on the edges ; the floures are yellow, and consist of threds, the seed is little, the root long and slender.”

“As touching the faculties of Saint Barnabies Thistle, which are as yet not found out, we have nothing to write.” (1597.)

*“St. Bartholomew
Brings the cold dew.”*

*“When St. Barnaby bright smiles night and day
Poor Ragged Robin blooms in the hay.”*

JUNE TWELFTH.

*“Convolvulus will next in boundless Stores,
Cloath the moist Vale with yet unfinish'd Flow'rs ;
These rude Essays were first for Lilly's meant,
When Nature on a nobler Work intent,
First took the pencil and began to paint.”*

—RAPIN.

“The Blue Withiwinde hath slender branches and small, by which it clymbeth up, and wrappeth or windeth it selfe about trees or poles. The leaves be large and corner'd, lyke to the olde leaves of Ivey, saving that they be not so hard. The flowers are fashioned like belles, blewe and hollowe, the seed is black, and almost three square, lying in knoppes and huskes, after the same manner as the seede of the white Binde weede.”—LYTE, 1578.

“Such is the beauty and lustre of some Flowers, that our Saviour saith of the Lillies of the Field (which some, not without reason, suppose to have been Tulips) that *Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these*. And it is observed by *Spigelius*, that the Art of the most skilful Painter cannot so mingle and temper his Colours, as exactly to imitate or counterfeit the native one of Flowers.”—*The Wisdom of God*, by John Ray, 1680.

JUNE THIRTEENTH.—Have you noticed, Cynthia, that butterflies always choose the colour of a flower to form a contrast with their wings? A brimstone butterfly loves best to poise on the blue of a larkspur bloom. A peacock chooses a white Madonna lily to lie upon. A red admiral seems to think an evening primrose, or mauve rhododendron is fitting background to his black and scarlet robe. I still believe that butterflies are the souls of the fairies until some one convinces me otherwise.

*“As, in the sunshine of the morn,
A butterfly (but newly born)
Sat proudly perking on a Rose,
With pert conceit his bosom glows;
His wings (all glorious to behold)
Bedropt with azure, jet, and gold,
Wide he displays; the spangled dew
Reflects his eyes and various hue.”*

Evidently Gay understood a butterfly's disposition; I have often seen a butterfly “perking on a Rose,” in the sunshine, and have grieved to think its life was so short. Yet, after all, if the task is finished there is no object in lingering on in a world where flowers die, and partings wound, and the sun is oft behind a cloud. Till the rest comes we must be patient awhile, careful always—no matter if we stand in the twilight—to bring sunshine to others.

JUNE FOURTEENTH.

*"The shining pansy, trimmed with golden lace ;
The tall-topped lark-heels, feathered thick with flowers ;
The woodbine, climbing o'er the door in bowers ;
The London tufts of many a mottled hue ;
The pale pink pea, and monk's-hood darkly blue ;
The white and purple gillyflowers, that stay
Lingering in blossom summer half away ;
The single blood-walls, of a luscious smell,
Old-fashioned flowers which housewives love so well ;
The columbines, stone blue, or deep night brown,
Their honeycomb-like blossoms hanging down ;
Each cottage garden's fond adopted child,
Though heaths still claim them, where they yet grew wild ;
With marjoram knots, sweetbriar, and ribbon grass,
And lavender, the choice of every lass."*

—CLARE.

Clare writes of cottage gardens in a way we fail to do to-day. He brings the very scent of the flowers into his writing. The more I read old books the more delight I have in them, and the more I appreciate the old-world language. Parkinson, in telling us how to make a garden of flowers, writes : "Thus, gentlewomen, for your delight (for these pleasures are the delights of leisure, which hath bred your love and liking for them, and although you are herein predominant, yet cannot they be barred from your beloved, who I doubt not, wil share with you in the delight as much as is fit) have I taken this paines, to set downe, and bring to your knowledge such rules of art."

As much as is fit, indeed ! as if we women were ever over-foolish about our gardens !

JUNE FIFTEENTH.—I have on the table in my Summer Parlour a pale blue bowl of poppies. Did you know that you can prevent the leaves of poppies dropping off by placing the stalks in boiling water directly you pick them, and leaving them there till the water is cool? They will last a week if served in that way. Gerard calls poppies “cheese-bowls”; I wonder can you tell me why? He says, “Of the garden poppie there be many variable colours, and of Great beauty, although of evill smell, whereupon our gentlewomen call it Joan Silver-pin.” I fail me to see any connection between an evil scent and such a pretty name. He tells us too that “a Candle made of the seeds of white Poppie, or made into almond milk, and so given, causeth sleepe, . . .” and again, “the fields are garnished and overspread with these wilde Poppies in June and August.” So they are. Our fields are so “garnished,” and literally blaze in the sun.

Ruskin writes: “The Poppy is the most transparent and delicate of all the blossoms of the field. The rest, nearly all of them depend on the texture of their surface for colour. But the Poppy is painted glass; it never glows so brightly as when the sun shines through it. Whenever it is seen against the light, it is a flame, and warms the wind like a blown ruby.”

The wild poppy is called also “Corn Rose,” or “The Red Mantle of Ceres.” Cowley writes: “The Poppy is scattered over the fields of corn, that all the needs of man may be easily satisfied, and that bread and sleep may be found together.”

JUNE SIXTEENTH.

*"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies ;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."*

—TENNYSON.

*"Yes, you delightful handyworks of Him
Who arch'd the heavens, and spann'd this solid earth,
Before Whose glory day's proud light is dim,
And art's achievements, if not food for mirth,
Display at best its barrenness and dearth,—
You, too, instruct us, with 'line on line,
Precept on precept,' show us by your birth,
Your buds, your blossoming, and your decline,
Time's never-ceasing flight, and tell us truths divine."*

—BERNARD BARTON.

A very very old writer truly says, "The World would be a pitiful small thing indeed, if it did not contain enough for the Enquiries of the whole world." Flowers teach so many lessons: that we must needs be careful to rejoice in the sunshine; that showers are necessary for our growth; that if the blossoms are to be perfect, pruning is absolutely necessary. Lilies will not grow upright unless tied to a stake. Weeds, unless uprooted, will seed themselves and choke the flowers. That the ground must be well prepared for all plants, and that it is not the grandest and the gaudiest flowers which are the sweetest, or give the greatest pleasure.

JUNE SEVENTEENTH.—Here are some gleanings from Rabin, Englished by J. Evelyn, 1673, relating to summer flowers :—

*“Tarrow will now a thousand leaves expose,
And Summer Iris various colours shows.
With Malva, Linum, yellow Mellilot,
And red Ononis too ; whose binding root
Do’s oft the tardy Husbandman molest,
And stops the progress of his lab’ring beast.”*

*“Lovely Carnations then their flow’rs dilate ;
The worth of them is, as their beauty, great.
Their Smell is excellent ; a God below
Restrains the swelling leaves, which curled grow
Divided too ; this flow’r exacts our care :
For if th’ extreams of heat or cold the air
Molest too much, they’re blasted in their birth,
Unable to aspire above the earth.
Morning and evening therefore you must chuse
To water them, or else their charms they lose.”*

*“Within a while your garden waxes white,
And snowy flowers will surprize your sight.
For if the summer do’s not late arrive,
On verdant stalks the Lillies will revive.*

*“Blew-bottle, Lark-spur, of their own accord
Now in the fields their diff’rent leaves afford.”*

This is such pretty writing, I think. Olden-day authors seem to *care* so much for their flowers ; and after all these years, which we count by the hundred, we, too, love the same flowers in the same way.

JUNE EIGHTEENTH.—I dedicate this page to the
 “bird of the Sun.”

*“Hark ! hark ! the lark at Heaven’s gate sings,
 And Phæbus ’gins arise,
 His steeds to water at those springs
 On chaliced flowers that lies ;
 And twinkling Mary-buds begin
 To ope their golden eyes ;
 With everything that pretty is,
 My lady sweet arise ;
 Arise, arise.”*

—SHAKESPEARE.

*“Up with me ! up with me into the clouds !
 For thy song, Lark, is strong ;
 Up with me, up with me into the clouds !
 Singing, singing,
 With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
 Lift me, guide me till I find
 That spot that seems so to thy mind !”*

—WORDSWORTH.

*“Hail to thee, blithe spirit !
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.*

*Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest
 Like a cloud of fire ;
 The blue deep thou wingest,
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.”*

—SHELLEY.

JUNE NINETEENTH.—To-day I have had a bowl of cornflowers by my side. So I deem it fit to give to-day to the flower for recompense. I pray of you to read a description of a Cornflower, Hunt Sickle, Blew Bottle, Blew Blow, Blue Cap—call it what you will. We cannot write in these days as men did then. In the rush of over-work we tumble over words, and we lose the restful, gentle tone of such passages.

“The Great Blew Bottle hath long leaves smooth, soft, downy, and sharp pointed: among the leaves rise up crooked and pretty thicke branches, chamfered, furrowed, and garnished with such leaves as are next the ground; on the tops thereof stand faire blew flours, tending to purple, consisting of divers little flowers, set in a scaly husk or knap like those of knapweed; the seed is rough and bearded at one end, smooth at the other and shining; the root is rough and long lasting (contrary to the rest of the Corn floures), and groweth yearly into new shoots whereby it greatly encreaseth.”

It is a pretty description, and painteth the flower very clearly for us. Culpepper, in his *Herbal*, tells us of the flower, and then adds, “If you please to take them from the Cornfields and transplant them in your garden, especially towards the full moon, they will grow more double than they are, and many times change colour.” We have sown them in our wild garden, and double or single I shall be well pleased if they grow.

JUNE TWENTIETH.

TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME SOME ROSES.

*“ As late I rambled in the happy fields,
What time the sky-lark shakes the tremulous dew
From his bush clover covert ; when anew
Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields :
I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,
A fresh-blown musk-rose ; ’twas the first that threw
Its sweets upon the summer : graceful it grew
As is the wand that Queen Titania wields.
And as I feasted on its fragrancy,
I thought the garden-rose it far excell’d :
But when, O friend ! thy roses came to me
My sense with their deliciousness was spell’d :
Soft voices had they, that with tender plea
Whisper’d of peace, and truth, and friendliness unquell’d.”*

—KEATS.

*“ When comes the Summer
Full-leaved and strong,
And gay birds gossip
The orchard long,—
Sing hid, sweet honey
That no bee sips ;
Sing red, red roses,—
And my Love’s lips ! ”*

*“ There will I make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers and a kirtle,
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.”*

—MARLOWE.

JUNE TWENTY-FIRST.

*"The fox-glove, closing inly, like the shell ;
The hyacinth ; the Rose, of buds the chief ;
The thorn, be-diamonded with dewy showers ;
The thyme's wild fragrance, and the heather-bell :
All, all, are there."*

It is not for me to say if the poet perchance saw all these flowers in bloom at the same moment, or if he was only dreaming a dream of flowers. To-day I am charmed by groups of aquilegias ; Columbines "as they are called of women," or Cocksfoot—Culverwort. Erasmus Darwin writes : "In the Columbine the nectary is imagined to be like the neck and body of a bird, and the two petals standing upon each side to represent wings ; whence its name of columbine, as if resembling a nest of young pigeons fluttering whilst their parent feeds them." Parkinson evidently loved this flower, for he praises it so highly : "Columbines single and double, of many sorts, fashions, and colours, very variable both speckled and party coloured, are flowers of that respect, as that no garden would willingly be without them, that could tell how to have them, yet the rarer the flowers are, the more trouble to keepe." This is natural ; but flowers are worth any trouble ! In Maund's *Botanic Garden* I find : "The term, Aquilegia, is compounded from the Latin *aquila*, an eagle ; and *lego*, to gather ; in allusion to the nectaries, which are, in most species, peculiarly recurved, and bear a fancied resemblance to the closing claws of an eagle."

For me, I cling to the word "Columbine" ; it is a far prettier name, to my thinking.

JUNE TWENTY-SECOND.—It is too hot, dear Kalendar, to write anything of great note on your page, for I have no energy to search old books or even to task my brain with writing of anything new. All the world is sunshine, even the wind brings no freshness with it. I think the baby birds in my bird boxes must long for air. The big tits began feeding their young at three o'clock this morning and were hard at work when a throstle awoke me and I went to the window to see if a wicked rabbit was eating my roses. There is nought in the wide world so raises my ire as to walk round the rosary and find beautiful new brown shoots ruthlessly severed from the trees. I could sit down and cry, only that might appear childish. That bunny must pay with his life for such behaviour. I can bear it no longer. In the field the broom is a cloud of golden glory, with, here and there, a bed of blue buglos. Such grand spikes of blue flower, tapering off into delicate pink buds. I trow it is the most beautiful of all the wild flowers. It refuses to come up where it is sown, but it reappears again at will, and so I never worry about it. In the garden rhododendrons are a mass of bloom and the giant syringa is sweet and fair and white. The rockery is blue and crimson, with veronica and lychnis, and delicate little white-fringed pinks between. The house is covered with roses. "Everywhere are roses, roses." On the pole of the Carmine Pillar a fly-catcher sits as usual, while another fly-catcher chooses the sundial for his post. I would fain be idle for a while, and my pen drops from my hand from pure laziness.

JUNE TWENTY-THIRD.—MIDSUMMER EVE.

PERILLA, I cannot have thee wandering abroad at midnight. I know that this is the day young girls try to discover who their husbands will be. But thy life is still at Spring-time; I would fain have thee tarry awhile and bask in the sunshine. Thy little shoes are placed in the shape of a T by thy bed, and I hear thee whisper—

*“Hoping this night my true love to see
I place my shoes in the form of a T.”*

And I watched thee at the window, singing—

*“New moon, new moon, I hail thee!
By all the virtue in thy body,
Grant this night that I may see
Him who my true love is to be!”*

Thou art over-foolish, Perilla, wearing thy stockings inside-out for luck and watching for letters in candles and strangers in thy tea-cup. Thou hast spent to-day wandering over the clover field seeking a four-leaved trefoil. But I saw thee lost in the song of the lark and thou gavest up thy search. “Bubbles on tea denote kisses.” Fie, fie, Perilla! It is well roses bloom on thy cheeks at such a suggestion. If it is true three magpies crossed thy path to-day, I fail me to hear the sound of wedding bells in the air. “When the gorse is out of blossom, kissing is out of fashion.” So that is why it flowers all the year round, thou wouldst make me believe. I fear me thou art a sad flirt, Perilla, and I ought to chide thee; but thou wilt only laugh, as the flowers laugh: thy chatter is like the song of birds, and thy life—like sunshine.—Ah! me! God keep the clouds away!

JUNE TWENTY-FOURTH.—MIDSUMMER DAY.

AND to-day I dedicate to the Rose, for my rosary is a little world of delight. Shakespeare evidently does not agree with me.

*"Here's flowers for you,
Hot Lavender, Mints, Savoury, Marjoram ;
The Marygold, that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises, weeping ; these are flowers
Of middle summer, and I think they are given
To men of middle age. I're welcome."*

Yes, and you are welcome too to my roses, be you of middle age or no ! I myself think that you cannot class roses with other flowers. They are a separate tribe all to themselves. I find in one old book that "Roses have never changed from the beginning of the world, and they have constantly created Pleasure to this moment." In *Nature Display'd* the author agrees with me (but as he lived nearly two hundred years ago I suppose I should be more correct if I said I agree with him !) :—

"Would not one be apt to say, that, at least, the most lovely of all the tribe, are separated from the Commonalty of Flowers, in order to form a shining Embassy ; and that they advance to render Homage to their Lord, and are deputed to hail him King of Nature." Certainly the rose is far above the "Commonalty of Flowers." Take a bunch of yellow Banksia roses ; no heart, however hard, but will be touched thereby.

*"First of all the rose, because its breath
Is rich beyond the rest, and when it dies
It doth bequeath a charm to sweeten death."*

—BARRY CORNWALL.

*"The scarlet Lychnis, the garden's pride,
Flames at St. John the Baptist's tyde."*

JUNE TWENTY-FIFTH.—There are some birds whose real names seem absolutely unknown to the ordinary countryman ; one of these is the Wryneck. Ask any rustic if he has heard the Wryneck, and he will look at you stolidly and say he has never heard tell of such a bird ; but ask him if he has heard the Cuckoo's Mate or the Barking-bird and a gleam of intelligence will dawn upon his face. By whatever name we like to call him, the Wryneck is an interesting and not a very common bird. He is brown in colour and of a rather heavy build, so cannot be called attractive, but his habit of twisting his neck is curious ; his cry is peculiar, something like a Woodpecker's, only all on one note, and his partiality for ants and their eggs as a food distinguishes him from all other birds, for though Woodpeckers will eat ants, none are so fond of these insects as the Wryneck.

The name Cuckoo's Mate is given him because he is heard calling loudly a few days before the Cuckoo arrives, he himself being also a bird of passage. For a similar reason he is sometimes called the Nightingale's Clerk. Like other birds who make their nests in holes, the Wryneck hisses loudly if the nest is approached, and hence he is sometimes known as the Snake-bird. It seems probable from the common use of names other than the real one, that this bird was at one time far more common with us than he now is, and it is not unlikely that the increase in the number of pheasants in our woods has deprived him of much of his favourite food.

JUNE TWENTY-SIXTH.—Ah ! but I have found thee a recipe at last, which will fill thy heart with delight. You who have apricots in your garden will glory in it, I know well. Send me some of it “glassed” when made, sweetheart, though methinks thy head will whirl when thou hast read it through, even as mine did.

TO MAKE JUMBALS OF APRICOCKS OR QUINCES.

“Take Apricocks or Quinces, and coddle them tender ; then take their pulp and dry it in a dish over a Chafing dish of coals, and set it in a stove for a day or two ; then beat it in a stone Mortar, putting in as much Sugar as will make a stiffe paste ; then colour it with Saunders, Cochinele, or blew Starch, and make it up in what colour you please, rowl them with battle-dores into long pieces, and tye them up in knots, and so dry them.”

Now what thinkest thou of that ? couldst thou coddle thy apricots tender ? And prithee tell me the colour of “Saunders” ? I have just referred myself to Gerard, and there I find an account of the Saunder’s tree. It cometh from the East Indies, and much used—now list thee—for its red colour. It has a fruit “the bignesse of a cherrie,” which “falleth in the winde.” So in writing for thee I have learnt something myself. This recipe was written before 1656, so is to be depended upon. If thou wilt make me a Jumbal, I will cook thee a conserve of Roses after the Italian manner.

JUNE TWENTY-SEVENTH.—In most, if not in all our woodland districts, the loud, laughing cry of the Green Woodpecker may often be heard.

*“The skylark in ecstasy sang from a cloud,
And chanticleer crowed and the yaffel laughed loud.”*

A cry which the peasants consider to be a sure sign of the approach of rain, which has earned for him the sobriquet of Rain-bird. He is also called Owl-bird and Wood-sprite. The Yaffel is a large, handsome, green bird, bearing on his head a cap of brightest red. It is not only in the woods we meet him. Often he may be seen on our lawn or in the green meadows near his home, searching for insect food, and so dabbling in the wet soil as sadly to besmirch his brightly-coloured feathers. These birds in the spring-time make numerous borings in the same tree, as if anxious to use its stem for a nesting-place, but unable to find the exact spot to suit them. These holes are perfectly round, as if made with an augur, and vary in size, according to their depth, from one to three inches in diameter. It is when thus employed that the Yaffel makes that peculiar jarring sound in spring, which can be heard at a very great distance, resembling the grating noise made by the bough of a tree when split and moved by the wind.

The Greater and the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker are also by no means rare, though the latter is not so often seen as the former. The general colour of both species is black and white, especially the wings, which are conspicuously barred. The male has the bright red cap common to woodpeckers, but in him we miss the laughter we so prize in the Yaffel.

JUNE TWENTY-EIGHTH.—Here are some lines writ by one Thomas Miller, a real working basket-maker. His date unknown.

*“ In belted gold the bees with merry march
Through flowery towns go sounding on their way :
They pass the red-streaked woodbine’s sun-stained arch
And onward glide through streets of sheeted May,
Nor till they reach the summer roses stay,
Where maiden-buds are wrapt in decoy dreams,
Drowsy through breathing back the new-mown hay
That rolls its fragrance o’er the fringed streams,
Mirrors in which the sun now decks his quivering beams.*

*A chequer’d light streams in between the leaves,
Which in the green sward twinkles in the sun ;
The deep-voiced thrush his speckled bosom heaves,
And like a silver stream his song doth run
Down the low vale, edged with fir-trees dun.
A little bird now hops beside the brook,
Peeping about like an affrighted nun ;
And even as she drinks doth upward look,
Titters and drinks again, then seeks her cloister’d nook.*

*The leaves ‘ drop ’ ‘ drop ’ and dot the crisped stream
So quick, each circle wears the first away,
Far out the tufted bulrush seems to dream
And to the ripple nods its head alway ;
The water-flags with one another play,
Bowing to every breeze that blows between,
While purple dragon-flies their wings display :
The restless swallow’s arrowy flight is seen
Dimpling the sunny wave, then lost amid the green.”*

JUNE TWENTY-NINTH.—ST. PETER'S DAY.

THE CARNATION.

IN parts of Italy St. Peter's Day is called "The Day of Carnations." This flower was evidently a great favourite in olden days. Parkinson devotes a whole chapter to it. It has many old names: Julian, Jove's flower, Tuggies, Granpere, Gilli Flower, July Flower, Soppes-in-Wine. This last name comes from the custom of dipping this flower in wine at feasts. Chaucer wrote in Edward III.'s reign:—

*"There springen herbes grete and smal,
The licoris and sete wale,
And many a clove gilofre,
To put in ale,
Whether it be moist or stale."*

Culpepper describes them thus: "They are gallant, fine, temperate flowers, they are great strengtheners both of the brain and heart." In Parkinson I find the following: "I will here but give you the names of some carnations. The red and gray Huls. The old Carnation differing from them both. The Gran Pere, The Cambersive, The Savadge, The Christall, The Prince, The White Carnation or Delicate, The Ground Carnation, The Dover, The Daintie, and many other Gillo flowers too tedious to recite in this place." Gerard again gives different names, "Soppes in wine, Pagiants, Horse flesh, Blunket," and he goes on to say that "if any one require further satisfaction, let them at the time of the yeare repaire to the garden of Mistresse Tuggie in Westminster." Hence the name "Tuggies" given to this flower.

"The Great Clove Carnation Gillo-Floure hath a thick round woody root, from which riseth up many strong joynted stalks set with long green leaves by couples: on the top of the stalks do grow very fair floures of an excellent sweet smell, and pleasant Carnation colour, whereof he tooke his name."

JUNE THIRTIETH.—"The Briar Bush or Hep-Tree is a plant so common and well knowne, that it were to small purpose to use many words in the description thereof; for even children with great delight eat the berries thereof when they be ripe, make chains and other pretty gewgawes of the fruit; cookes and gentlewomen make Tarts and such like dishes for pleasure thereof; and therefore this shall suffice for the description." Nothing is so lovely, to my mind, as a hedge covered with wild roses and honeysuckle.

"The Honisuckle that groweth wilde in every hedge, although it be very sweet, yet doe I not bring into my garden, but let it rest in his owne place, to serve their senses that travell by it, or have no garden."—PARKINSON.

"In Germany the rose briar is popularly supposed to be the tree upon whose branches the guilty Judas, overtaken by remorse, 'went out and hanged himself.' This is why in some parts the fruit of the plant is known as *Judas berries*. Some writers associate the rose briar with the unhappy tree with whose branches the Jews crowned the Saviour, and, according to a favourite German tradition, on every cruel thorn that pierced His brow as He hung upon the Cross, there sprang from the blood a rose."—*Flower Favourites*, by Lizzie Deas.

JULY FIRST.—"As for Flowers, we have still a great many, and the most part of them I have mention'd in the preceding Months."—*The Compleat Gard'ner*, 1649.

And a hundred years before, Bacon wrote: "In *July*, came Gilly-Flowers of all Varieties; Muske Roses; The Lime - Tree in blossom; Early Pears, and Plummes in Fruit; Guinitings; Quadlins."

With me after all these years I have my roses, and instead of fruit we have birds in plenty. A big bed of blue larkspurs, and white snapdragon is very lovely, and in the wild garden the broom is still golden. All the sweet-briar bushes are covered with pink flower, and the lanes are sweet with honeysuckle, where the red-backed shrikes are busy feeding their young. Alas! the song-birds are silent, and only heard at intervals, and even the wealth of sweet-peas does not make up for the loss of the singing. What a message the flowers bring!

*"And yet, could I live it over,
This life that stirs in my brain,
Could I be both maiden and lover,
Moon and tide, bee and clover,
As I seem to have been, once again,
Could I but speak it and show it,
This pleasure more sharp than pain,
That baffles and lures me so,
The world should once more have a poet,
Such as it had
In the ages glad
Long ago!"*



JULY

JULY SECOND.—To all who live near open heaths or the edges of woods where bracken is abundant, the loud curious churring sound made by the Night-jar as he squats on the limb of a tree, in the warm summer evenings, must be very familiar. In parts of the country, even where he is plentiful, the name Night-jar is almost unknown, and that of Night-hawk, Fern-owl, or in Surrey, Puckeridge, is more commonly met with. Some of these local names define very clearly the habits of this bird; and in olden days when goats were more plentiful than they are now, and when legendary lore was rife among men, he was frequently known as the Goat-sucker, a name originating from his wide and capacious mouth, which is his chief characteristic. The Night-hawk is not a carnivorous bird, for his food consists entirely of insects, such as moths and beetles, which he takes when on the wing. He is a late visitor with us, and we associate him more with the warm evenings of June than with the rainy nights of April.

A bird of the night, we seldom see him except when spectre-like he wheels round and round a tree in pursuit of his prey, for by day these birds take refuge in the heath or fern where two very beautifully mottled and marbled eggs are laid, almost on the bare ground amongst the dead foliage of the preceding year. If disturbed from his haunt by day, he will flit for a few yards in a bewildered flight, and again pop down noiselessly into the thick cover which hides him from the light of day.

JULY THIRD.—I must put on record a little nature-picture I passed, because I would have the rare beauty of it remain a joy for ever. Climbing the larch poles of a pergola, in full blossom a carmine pillar rose shone crimson in the sun. Twined among the branches was a clematis, great spotless white stars, of wondrous purity and size ; and at the foot of the pergola a bed of blue lithospermum in flower. It was a gorgeous contrast. The intense blue of the tiny bell-shaped flowers with the crimson and white.

These lines of Tennyson's set me dreaming to-day :—

*“The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey,
And the nightingale thought, ‘ I have sung many songs,
But never a word so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away.’ ”*

If the summer world of to-day is so beautiful, what will the world be when the years have died away ?

We must order our seeds to-day, and sow at once for the coming spring. Wall-flowers, forget-me-nots, Canterbury bells. All the dear old flowers. One is so apt to forget, and to be too late with gardening, and we never can pick up the stitches if we let the right time pass. One dropped stitch makes such a hole in the garment of life !

JULY FOURTH.—Oh, Cynthia! my wrynecks have flown. I am sorrowing for them, and they are calling all over the garden, and thou art not present to mourn with me. Perhaps they are cold and hungry, and know not where to sleep to-night. Their home has been in a new bird-box, which was hung on the beech tree by the little wicket-gate which leadeth into the wood. First some titmice made a nest therein, but for some reason unknown to us they gave up their home. Ah! well, I must own to thee I am glad now, though I was sad then. On the morn of May 31st I was passing thereby when I thought I would have one peep to see if any one had been near the box. I lifted the lid, not too gently, and was accosted by a noise like the loud hiss of a snake. It would have frightened thee, Cynthia, and I must own even I was startled. I peeped among the soft green leaves which almost cover the box, and to my joy I espied a wryneck sitting on eight white eggs (which I counted when she flew off). Thou knowest a wryneck, sweetheart, called oftentimes the cuckoo's mate, because they come with, or just before the cuckoo. The baby birds were hatched out on June 11th, and oh! the angry baby-hisses they gave for greeting when I paid my daily visit and brought no food. They never twittered like other baby birds; they only hissed. And to-day they have flown, and the box is empty! Hope with me, Cynthia, that they will come thither another year.

JULY FIFTH.—Oh, how busy the bees are !

*“The bee,
All dusty as a miller, takes his toll
Of powdery gold and grumbles.”*

They certainly never give one the idea of being satisfied. A bee works too hard to be happy ! Yet an insect who lives its whole life in Flower-land ought to be full of joy and merriment and sweet content. Here is “The Bag of a Bee,” by friend Herrick :—

*“About the sweet bag of a Bee,
Two Cupids fell at odds ;
And whose the pretty prize shu’d be,
They vow’d to ask the Gods.*

*Which Venus hearing, thither came,
And for their boldness stript them :
And taking hence from each his flame ;
With rods of Mirtle whipt them.*

*Which done, to still their wanton cries,
When quiet grown sh’ad seen them,
She kist, and wip’d thir dove-like eyes ;
And gave the bag between them.”*

What a delicious idea. I think the old poets had much more imagination than the new, for which theory I expect cries of derision from all around me ! Who cannot remember the hum of bees in a lime-tree, or amongst the heather, or in the golden gorse ? There is something soothing in the sound.

*“What a day
To sun me and do nothing.”*

JULY SIXTH.—I have been listening to the bursting of broom pods all over the field in the sun. Writing in 1830, a naturalist in his journal notes, "Our poorer people a few years ago used to collect broom by cart loads about the month of July; and the season of 'wood waxen' was a little harvest to them: but it interfered greatly with our haymaking. Women could gain each about two shillings a day clear of all expenses by gathering it; but they complained that it was very hard and laborious occupation, the plant being drawn up by the roots, which are strongly interwoven in the soil. The dyer gave them 8d. for a hundredweight greatly enhanced by the dishonest practice of watering the load for the specious purpose of keeping it green."

"To spend time in writing a description of Broom is altogether needless, it being so generally used by all the good housewives almost throughout this land to sweep their houses with, and therefore very well known to all sorts of people. They grow in many places of this land commonly, and as commonly spoil all the land they grow in."—CULPEPPER's *Herbal*.

"A rural charm against dodder, tetter, and strangling weeds, is by placing a chalked tile at the four corners, and one in the middle of our fields, which, though ridiculous in its intention, was rational in the contrivance, and a good way to diffuse the magic through all parts of the area."—SIR THOMAS BROWN.

JULY SEVENTH.—I have again been reading Clare. He is becoming a great favourite of mine, because I am grateful to him for conjuring country delights for me. He writes of a country walk in summer :—

*“No noise is heard, save sutherings through the trees
Of brisk wind gushes, or a trembling breeze ;
And songs of linnets in the hedgerow thorn,
Twittering their welcomes to the day’s return ;
And hum of bees, whose labour’s doom’d to stray
To ceaseless bustle on his weary way.”*

Then again his description of a summer morning makes one verily feel the freshness :—

*“Every leaf that forms a shade,
And every flowret’s silken top,
And every shivering bent and blade,
Stoops, bowing with a diamond drop.*

*And hear the beetle sound his horn ;
And hear the skylark whistling nigh,
Sprung from his bed of tufted corn,
A hailing minstrel in the sky.*

*First sunbeam, calling night away,
To see how sweet thy summons seems,
Split by the willow’s wavy grey,
And sweetly dancing on the streames :*

*And the bee at early hours
Sips the tawny bean’s perfumes ;
While butterflies infest the flowers,
Just to show their glossy plumes.”*

I could copy poem after poem, each telling the same story and making the love of country a real living thing.

JULY EIGHTH.—This is the sweet time of year when one loves to wander through the lanes in the evening and feel at last refreshed with exercise. All day long the heat has been almost more than one can bear, and the dry baked earth has glared at us like a furnace when the door is opened, and all vegetation has longed with a shrivelling longing for the dew which only the night will bring. A yellow-hammer not yet asleep sings his monotonous little tale about the bread with no cheese. Down the lane come two hard-worked farm-horses, their heads wreathed in honey-suckle to keep off the maddening flies, while sitting sideways on the leader, his face almost hidden in a large broad-brimmed hat, is the almost equally hard-worked carter; for who cares for heat where hay is to be made, and who will not work late when the farmer pays well? The fir-wood in the west is inky black, though here and there a thin streak of gold is seen between stem and branch. A ghostly-looking bird flies over us, and while we wonder who he is he tells his own story in a single curious note and we know at once it is a puckeridge. We watch him as he flies in search of moth or beetle over the heather, and then, as if his note had been a signal to others of his race, the peculiar churring, whirring sonnet of two other goat-suckers reaches us from the pines scattered over the purple common. We notice that the birds make two distinct notes, one two full tones above the other, and we almost fancy we can hear them take breath. Night comes on apace and the last gleam dies of a day passed on for ever.

JULY NINTH.—"Flowers have an agreeable Correspondence with our Eyes, and a Set of powerful attractions, that invite us to approach them. Whenever we gather them, they present us with new Perfections, in proportion to our regarding them with a nearer Attention. The greatest Part of them, not only regale our View, with the Beauty and Arrangement of their Colours, but gently delight our Smell, with an exquisite Perfume; and when they have gratified our Senses, with an innocent Satisfaction; the Mind still discloses Wonders in them, that ravish its faculties."—*Nature Display'd*, 1736.

"July holdeth in flower some of the Ladies Bowers and Jasmines, and besides doth glory in the Female Balsame Apple, the Indian Cresses or yellow Larkes spurres, the purple Flower-gentle, and the Rose Bay."—PARKINSON.

Gerard, writing of the Ladies' Bower, says it is useful because of "its aptness in making of arbors, bowers, and shadie covertures in gardens."

*"The bee through flowery gardens goes
Buzzing to drink the morning's tears,
And from the early lily bears
A kiss commended to the Rose,
And like a wary messenger,
Whispers some amorous story to his ear."*

(Seventeenth Century.)

JULY TENTH.—When the sun rose this morning I thought of Jeremy Taylor's description of a sunrise, and I feel I must copy it into my Kalendar, so that others may know it too.

“When the sun approaches towards the gate of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to mattins, and bye and bye gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns like those which decked the brows of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still, while man tells the story, the sun gets up higher till he shows a full fair light, and a face, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; so is a man's reason and his life.”

And from Jeremy Taylor I turn to Hinton and read: “Man's perfect life is a life in which love can be perfect, and find no limitation; it is a life so truly lived in others, so participant with them, that utter and unbounded sacrifice is possible.” . . . “Man's perfect life should use all suffering for joy; that is, a love for others should be so powerful within us, and a consciousness of other's good should be so fully ours, such rapture should possess us, that all loss, all griefs, should be to us the trivial sacrifices which love delights to have the opportunity to make.”—*Mystery of Pain*.

JULY ELEVENTH.—Any one walking along our country lanes in May or June, or even July, is pretty certain to be challenged sooner or later by the common white-throat, who, starting suddenly up from nowhere, perches where he is easily seen, and with crest erect, and defiant mien, hurls a harsh sentence or two at the passer-by. The nest is not far off, and is generally to be found in the coarse herbage or nettles that cover the hedge bank. It is a light little structure composed of dead grasses, and generally placed about eighteen inches from the ground. If the young are about, the old bird, instead of singing, gives a low "churr" as a caution to his offspring that danger is nigh at hand. The white-throat is a migrant, arriving with us about the 10th of April, and during the first few weeks of his visit the song is much more sustained than it is later. The bird then often sings while hovering in the air, and in crossing from one side of the lane to the other, and at such times the song is less harsh, and frequently resembles that of the swallow.

The lesser white-throat is more usually met with in gardens. Gilbert White observed one running up the stems of the crown imperials. He is a noisy little fellow, and should there be good cover near the house, the loud shake (which is his distinguishing feature of song) becomes almost wearisome, as it is to be heard from morn till eve. This shake resembles the opening part of a chaffinch's song, and is often mistaken for it. If one is near enough to the bird another song can be heard, a low gurgling note, filling up the intervals between the louder notes.

JULY TWELFTH.

*"I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day ;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze ;
He did not cease ; but cooed—and cooed ;
And somewhat pensively he wooed ;
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending ;
Of serious faith, and inward glee ;
That was the Song—the Song for me !"*
—WORDSWORTH.

"I see the buds of larkspur with purple Eyes, tall hollyhocks, red and yellow ; the broad sunflowers, caked in gold, with bees buzzing round them ; wildernesses of pinks and hot-glowing peonies ; poppies run to seed, the sugared lily, and faint mignonette."

*"Bring hither the Pincke and Purple
Cullambine with Gelliflowres ;
Bring Coronations, and Sops in Wine,
Worn of Paramoures :
Strowe me the ground with Daffadowndillies,
And Cowslips, and King's Cups, and loved Lillies.
The pretie Pawnce
And the Chevisaunce,
Shall match with the fayre flowre Delice."*

The Bohemians say, "In July the quail calls to the reapers in the field, 'Come cut : come cut : here's five kreuzers, five kreuzers for you.'"

JULY THIRTEENTH.

"MONICA, DARLING,—Frown not at me again; it me. And I, I have been trying to live up to your saddens birds and flowers but—I have failed.

*See, see, mine own sweet jewel,
What I have for my darling :
A robin red-breast and a starling.
These I give both in hope to move thee ;
Yet thou say'st I do not love thee.'*

"A *canzonet*, Monica, written in 1593. So I pray thee say you love me. If you write too much you will go out of your mind, and it would weary us to death to hear you prate—prate—prate—all day long of birds and flowers.

*'Sleep, O sleep, fond fancy,
My head, alas, thou tirest
With false delight of that which thou desireth.
Sleep, I say, fond fancy,
And leave my thoughts molesting :
Monica's head hath need of sleep and resting.'*

"The flowers I have planted do not come up, birds I look for never appear, hives I place by the lavender beds are uninhabited, even the nightingales prefer other gardens to mine. Oh! how tired I am of the country. Meals out-of-doors that I dreamt of result only in midges. Caterpillars have eaten my roses, and all my plants of clematis have caught the disease from the lilies. There are wasps galore, and the hawfinches, your horrid beloved hawfinches, have eaten all my peas. Monica, I am tired of life, your life. There is too much sun for one thing, and too much rain for another. Nothing is ever right in the country. I will come and see you when I come home again. I see you frown. Good-bye.—Thine ever, CORNINA."

JULY FOURTEENTH.—Noon ! and the day is hot and parched and weary.

*“ All how silent and how still ;
Nothing heard but yonder mill ;
While the dazzled eye surveys
All around a liquid blaze ;
And amid the scorching gleams,
If we earnest look, it seems
As if crooked bits of glass
Seem'd repeatedly to pass.
Oh, for a puffing breeze to blow !
But breezes are all strangers now ;
Not a twig is seen to shake,
Nor the smallest bent to quake ;*

*Bees are faint and cease to hum ;
Birds are overpower'd and dumb.
Rural voices all are mute,
Tuneless lie the pipe and flute.*

*Oh ! to see how flowers are took,
How it grieves me when I look :
Ragged-robins, once so pink,
Now are turn'd as black as ink,
And the leaves, being scorch'd so much,
Even crumble at the touch ;
Drowning lies the meadow-sweet,
Flopping down beneath one's feet :
While to all the flowers that blow,
If in open air they grow,
Th' injurious deed alike is done
By the hot relentless sun.”*

—CLARE.

JULY FIFTEENTH.—ST. SWITHIN.

ST. SWITHIN was Bishop of Winchester in 852, and so I come to look on him as a near neighbour, Farnham Castle being close at hand. In Poor Robin's *Almanack* for 1697 I find the following lines (Poor Robin was the pseudonym of Robert Herrick the poet):—

*“ In this month is St. Swithin's Day ;
On which, if that it rain, they say
Full forty days after it will,
Or more or less, some rain distil.
This Swithin was a saint, I trow,
And Winchester's bishop also,
Who, in his time, did many a feat,
As Popish legends do repeat.
A woman having broke her eggs
By stumbling at another's legs,
For which she made a woeful cry,
St. Swithin chanced for to come by,
Who made them all as sound, or more
Than ever that they were before.
Better it is to rise by time
And to make hay when the Sun do shine,
Than to believe in tales and lies,
Which idle monks and Friars devise.”*

“St. Swithin is christening the apples” is a very old saying.

*“ If day star appeareth, day comfort is nye,
If sunne be at south, it is noone by and by ;
If sunne be at westward, it setteth anon,
If sunne be at setting, the day is soon gon.”*

—Tusser, 1573.

JULY SIXTEENTH.—I want to gather thee a bouquet. “There be some flowers make a delicious Tussie-Mussie or Nosegay, both for sight and sound.” We could not write so delightfully in these days as they wrote of yore. “What flower like you best in all this border, heere be faire roses, sweete violets, fragrant Prime Roses, heere be Gilly-floures, Carnations, Sops in wine, sweet Johns, and what may either please you for sight, or delight you with savour : loth we are you should have a Posie of all, yet willing to give you one, not that which shall looke best, but such a one as you shall lyke best.” So writes one in the sixteenth century ; so write I to thee now.

“The bouquet may be an exile now ; but the revolutions of fashion will sure return this beautiful ornament to favour again. With us the nosegay yet retains its station as a decoration to our Sunday beaux ; but at our spring clubs and associations it becomes an essential, indispensable appointment ; a little of the spirit of rivalry seeming to animate our youths in the choice and magnitude of this adornment. The superb spike of a Brompton, or a ten weeks’ stock, long cherished in some sheltered corner for the occasion, surrounded by all the gaiety the garden can afford till it presents a very bush of flowers, forms the appendage of their bosoms, and, with the gay knots in their hats, and the sprightly hilarity of their looks, constitutes a pleasing village scene, and gives an hour of unencumbered felicity to common man and rural life, not yet disturbed by refinement and taste.”—*Journal of a Naturalist*, 1830.

JULY SEVENTEENTH.—There is sadness in the thought that the birds have ceased to sing. July and August are called “mute months,” in consequence of the cessation of their songs. All the love of life is over for the year. The nestlings have flown, and the parent birds are tired and worn with watching. They sing most when they work most. Is it so with all of us? They sing at the coming of spring; they are silent at its close.

*“Silence girt the woods; no warbling tongue
Talked now unto the echo of the groves:
Only the curled streams soft chidings kept;
And little gales that from the greene leafe swept
Dry Summer’s dust, in fearefull whisperings stirred,
As loth to waken any singing bird.”*

The chiff-chaff still sings a little, and dove, and pigeon, and black-cap. When the black-cap is really silent, we miss his song sadly. He is late building his nest, so, perhaps, he sings to us after the other birds have given up; but after all he only sings for a little in the middle of the day. At night we hear the puckeridge, and up the lane the white-throat and yellow-hammer bid us welcome, and of course the hedge-sparrow sings a little. But oh! we miss the grand chorus morn and eve.

Sweet-peas are still in flower, and the water meadows are pink with willow-herb. Harebells make a blue carpet to the lane on either side, and the commons glow crimson in the sun. I have a bowl of yellow mulleins by my side—“My Ladies Candles” the “women calleth them.” There is a stone-crop I have just heard of called “welcome-home-husband-though-never-so-drunk.” Truly old names are curious!

JULY EIGHTEENTH.—Perilla, I would have you know that in a very old book I have just read this sorry advice, “Especially shun unripe fruit, and be moderate with cherries.” *Be moderate with cherries!* you who lie under a tree with a basketful by your side, and dip therein as you read some frivolous tale. You live a butterfly life, Perilla; yet I must admit we could not do without butterflies in life’s garden; it would be a dull world if every one took things seriously, and flew backwards and forwards to the hive making honey for other people to eat! and had no time to bask in the sunshine or even to admire the flowers from whence we get the honey. But I ought not thus to write to you. I ought to try and turn your attention away from butterflies to bee. You will “frivol,” I know, till

*“The bat begins with giddy wing
His circuit round the shed and tree
And clouds of dancing gnats to sing
A summer night’s serenity.”*

Even for you the gnats dance! I feel we do *too much* nowadays; in the rush and tumble of life we miss the sweet whisper of “the still small voice,” and we have not time to realise the all-prevailing Presence in a sunset sky or a flower, or even a—butterfly. But for you I copy these well-known lines, Perilla.

*“Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble deeds, not dream them, all day long,
And so make Life, and Death, and that For Ever
One grand sweet song.”*

JULY NINETEENTH.—This is my day of lilies.

*“Without thee, Love, the Lillies black do seem,
The Roses pale, and Hyacinths I deeme
Not lovely red. But if thou com'st to me
Lillies are white, red Rose, and Jacinths be.”*

So the lilies are white.

*“We are lilies fair,
The flower of virgin light;
Nature held us forth, and said,
'Lo! my thoughts of white.'”*

*Ever since then, angels
Hold us in their hands;
You may see them where they take
In pictures their sweet stands.*

*Like the garden's angels
Also do we seem,
And not the less for being crowned
With a golden dream.*

*Could you see around us
The enamoured air,
You would see it pale with bliss
To hold a thing so fair.”*

—LEIGH HUNT.

Over my writing-table in my Garden Room hangs a picture of white Madonna lilies in a blue mist of prayer. The centre lily is spotlessly white with golden heart, for a ray of light from Heaven falls across it. The others are white, but not perfectly white; for the dimness of earth is there. “I stand in the light reflecting the Light.” This is what my lilies tell me.

JULY TWENTIETH.—To Bryant I turn me to describe my feelings in my dear Kalendar.

*“ It is a sultry day ; the sun has drunk
The dew that lay upon the morning grass.
All is silent save the faint
And interrupted murmur of the bee,
Settling on the sick flowers, and then again
Instantly on wing.”*

I long for the summer wind, and at last it comes. The green boughs rustle.

*“ He is come,
Shaking a shower of blossoms from the shrubs,
And bearing in their fragrance ; and he brings
Music of birds, and rustling of young boughs,
And sound of swaying branches, and the voice
Of distant waterfalls. All the green herbs
Are stirring in his breath ; a thousand flowers,
By the roadside and the borders of the brook,
Nod gaily to each other ; glossy leaves
Are twinkling in the sun, as if the dew
Were on them yet, and silver waters break
Into small waves and sparkles as he comes.”*

Poor weary flowers, it broke my heart to see them. The orange heads of alstro maria bent to the ground, for their stalks were too tired to hold them. My roses looked worn and limp, and I took no pleasure in wandering in my rosary. Now that the soft breeze has cheered them, and whispered of coming dew to give them courage, I will begin to water them from my dipping well, and my garden will boast of a cheerier aspect. I cannot bear to see the dear flowers fading, and they boast of but little courage ; they lose heart at once, which is a foolish thing to do in this world of ours.

JULY TWENTY-FIRST.—This is Sweet-pea Tide ; I have bowls of white, and pink, and mauve. I like them much better grown in hedges of different colours. They always want some of their own green mixed with them to make them quite lovely. The beauty of sweet-peas is lost when put in a tight bunch in a small vase.

*“ Here are sweet peas on tip-toe for a flight,
With wings of gentle flush or delicate white,
And taper fingers catching at all things
To bind them all about with tiny wings.”*

—KEATS.

Dear sweet-peas, they—

*“ . . . Catch the neighbouring shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invert his branch,
Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.”*

—COWPER.

I love the following lines so much that I must write them down for Sweet-pea Tide, though by a writer of to-day. I hope he will not mind.

*“ Oh, what has been born in the night
To bask in this blithe summer morn ?
She peers in a dream of delight,
For something new-made or new-born.*

*Not spider-webs under the tree
Nor swifts in their cradle of mud,
But ‘ Oh, father, Sweet Mrs. Pea
Has two little babies in bud.’ ”*

JULY TWENTY-SECOND.—Hay is still being carried round here, and the sound of the mower reaches us, as we wander up the dusty lane, whose loose surface and dust-covered hedges show us that summer has indeed come. Near home the common white-throat sings at us, a harsh little song, not so complete as in the month of May, while his mate scolds us with a “churr, churr” from the hedge. Honeysuckle and wildroses deck the wayside, and heather begins to crimson the landscape and adds colour to Nature’s picture. There is plenty of golden broom left, but a constant popping is heard as the seed-pods crack with the blistering heat. In the garden we are delighted with a picture formed by the intertwining of the crimson rambler and the white “maids of the village” on the verandah, lobelia, evening primrose, alstromecria, snapdragon, are all out. “Snapdragon, or Calves Snout, or Lyons snap. They report that this herbe being hanged about one preserveth a man from being bewitched and that it maketh a garden gracious in the sight of people. The floures are fashioned like a frogs mouth or rather a dragons mouth from whence the women have taken the name Snapdragon. The seed is blacke, contained in round huskes fashioned like a calves snout or in mine opinion it is more like unto the bones of a sheeps head that hath been long in the water, and the flesh consumed clean away.”

The sweet-peas are splendid, but sparrows are greedily eating garden peas. “The garnet-headed yaffingale” mocks us in the wood.

JULY TWENTY-THIRD.—What a garden of beauty Shelley describes in his poem "The Sensitive Plant." He writes first of

*"The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And the narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness.
And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense ;"*

Then the rose and the lily, and afterwards

*"The jessamine faint, and the sweet tube rose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows ;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.
The plumed insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass ;
The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears."*

I have not room to copy more, but I can see the garden as I write, and in fancy the sweet scent of the flowers is wafted into the window of my Garden Room.

JULY TWENTY-FOURTH.

COMPOSING A GARLAND.

*“Here damask Roses, white and red,
Out of my lap first take I,
Which still shall run along the thread,
My chiefest flower this make I;
Amongst these roses in a row,
Next place I pinks in plenty,
These double daisies then for show,
And will not this be dainty?
The pretty pancy then I'll tie
Like stones some chain inchasing;
And next to them their near ally,
The purple violet placing.
The curious choice clove July-flour,
Whose kinds hight the carnation,
For sweetness of most sovereign power
Shall help my wreath to fashion;
A course of cowslips then I'll stick,
And here and there (tho' sparingly)
The pleasant primrose down I'll prick,
Like pearls, which will show rarely.
Then with these marygolds I'll make
My garland somewhat swelling,
These honeysuckles then I'll take,
Whose sweets shall help their smelling.
The Lily and the flower-de-lis,
For colour much contending,
For that, I them do only prize,
They are but poor in scenting:
The daffodil most dainty is
To match with these in meetness;
The Columbine compared to this,
All much alike for sweetness;
Sweet Williams, champions, sops-in-wine
One by another neatly:
Thus have I made this wreath of mine,
And finished it featly.”* —DRAYTON.

JULY TWENTY-FIFTH.—“The means by which climbing plants raise themselves up, so as to offer their flowers to the sun, are as various as they are curious, and they seldom blossom whilst trailing on the ground. The ivy and bignonia ascend by the help of little fibres, which fix themselves to the bark of trees or crevices in walls so tightly as to render their disengagement a difficult thing to be accomplished without injury to the trunk or building they are attached to. The honey-suckle, like the hop, twines itself spirally around the trunk or branches of trees, and often clasps them so closely, as to make an impression on the hardest timber. Others, as the vine or passion-flower, rear themselves by means of corkscrew tendrils, which hold so fast, that the strongest winds seldom disunite them from their support. Some plants climb by means of a hook in their leaf-stalk, or have a kind of vegetable hand given them, by which they are assisted in mounting, as the pea and several others.”—*Sylva Florifera*.

It always interests me to note the way hop vines are trained to climb their poles. When once started and tied in the right direction they climb upwards of themselves. Sweet-peas have the dearest little clinging tendrils of their own, and the virgin creeperia will wave a green thread in the air till wafted to some support round which to wind. How strange are the ways of Nature, and how much we can see and learn if we keep our eyes open. With which moral reflection I turn the leaf!

JULY TWENTY-SIXTH.

*“When you see gossamer flying,
Be sure the air is drying.”*

“If the down flyeth off colt’s foot, dandelyon, and thistles, when there is no winde, it is a sign of rain.”

“Tezils, or Fuller’s Thistle, being gathered and hanged up in the house, where the air may come freely to it, upon the alteration of cold and windy weather will grow smother, and ’gainst rain will close up his prickles.”

“If the weather is likely to come rainy, windy, or in other respects disagreeable, spiders fix the terminating filaments, on which the whole web is suspended, unusually short. If the terminating filaments are made uncommonly long, the weather will be serene, and continue so, at least for ten or twelve days. If spiders are totally indolent, rain generally succeeds; though their activity during rain is certain proof that it will only be of short duration, and followed by fair and constant weather. Spiders usually make some alterations in their webs every twenty-four hours; if these changes take place between the hours of six and seven in the evening, they indicate a clear and pleasant night.”—HONE.

JULY TWENTY-SEVENTH.—Heliotrope is the flower of love. One of the dearest and sweetest flowers I know. Here are two verses which teach me much :—

HELIOTROPE.

*“ A flower there is whose spirit spurns
The way divided service lies,
And all day long in worship turns
Sunward adoring eyes.*

*Homage more ardent yet is mine,
Needle to lodestar were less true
Whose thoughts unswervingly incline
Both night and day to you.”*

In some places this flower is called “love flower” or “God’s herb.” “The name heliotrope is derived from two Greek words, *helios*, the sun, and *trepo*, I turn, and it is doubtless owing to the flower’s habit of following the Great Stars of day, that this delicious little *herbe d’amour* is commonly regarded as the emblem of *faithful devoted love*.”

*“ The vine
Mantles the little casement, and the briar
Drops fragrant dew among the July flowers ;
And pansies rayed, and freaked with mottled pinks,
Grow among balm, and rosemary, and rue ;
There honeysuckles flaunt, and roses blow,
Almost uncultured—some with dark green leaves
Contrast their flowers of pure unsullied white ;
Others like velvet robes of regal state,
Of richest crimson.”*

—CHARLOTTE SMITH.

JULY TWENTY-EIGHTH.—How lovely the cottage gardens are now. Clare describes one so perfectly :—

“ *And where the marjoram once, and sage and rue,
And balm and mint, with curled-leaved parsley grew,
And double marigolds, and silver thyme,
And pumpkins 'neath the window used to climb ;
And where I often, when a child, for hours
Tried through the pales to get the tempting flowers ;
As lady's laces, everlasting peas,
True-love lies bleeding, with the hearts at ease ;
And golden rods, and tansy running high,
That o'er the pale top smiled on passer-by ;
Flowers in my time which every one would praise,
Though thrown like weeds from gardens nowadays.*”

Forbes Watson in his book urges us to plant old-fashioned flowers in our gardens, to give up the system of “bedding out,” and to treat flowers more individually and not only *en masse*. “But was there any want of beauty there ?” he asks, writing of old gardens. “And did you not feel, in looking at these flowers, how each made you love it as a friend—the Pinks and Sweet Williams, the Everlasting Peas, Valerian, Day Lily, Jacob’s Ladder, and a host of others ? And did you not notice how ever and again you fell upon some quaint strange plant which has been expelled from the modern border, which seemed to touch your inmost soul, and to fill the mind, especially if in childhood, with a sense of wonder and mysterious awe ?” He tells us our childhood imagination filled in the names of flowers, and tempted us to weave stories around the plants. At the same time I will not allow that we do not love flowers in the same way to-day.

JULY TWENTY-NINTH.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

*"I've watched you now a full half-hour
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little butterfly, indeed,
I know not if you sleep, or feed.
How motionless! —not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!*

*This plot of orchard ground is ours;
My trees they are, my sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough.
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days when we were young—
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now."*

—WORDSWORTH.

JULY THIRTIETH.—The Spanish Chestnuts are covered with bloom outside my Garden Room, and the bees are busier than ever. The scent is wafted in through the doorway on the west wind. My door is in two pieces like a stable door, and I fasten the top half back to see the view. On the window a great Humble Bee does nothing happily.

“*Burly, dozing, humble Bee !
Where thou art is clime for me.*

*Insect lover of the son,
Joy of thy dominion !
Sailor of the atmosphere,
Swimmer through the waves of air,
Voyager of light and noon,
Epicurean of June,
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum.*

*Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen,
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple sap, and daffodils,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern and agrimony,
Clover, catch-fly, adder's-tongue,
And briar-roses, dwelt among;
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he past.”*

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

JULY THIRTY-FIRST.—The lady-bird has come.

*“Lady-bird, Lady-bird, whither fly you,
To rest on the Rose or to sip of the dew ?
Lady-bird, Lady-bird, come to my bower ;
It will shade you from Sun and defend you from shower !”*

“The Lady bird or Lady cow is now very common. This insect, so often charged by being the cause of blights in Apple trees, is in reality the best remedy against that disease ; as, both when perfect or in its larve state, it feeds entirely upon the aphids, a genus of which the blight in question is a species ; hence the Lady bird may be frequently seen in the cankered spots of Apple trees ; not indeed sucking their nutritious juices, but devouring the real enemy of the future hopes of the orchard. In the Hop countries the Lady bird is not less useful, as it is well known to destroy the blight which does so much injury to that delicate plant.”—*Foster's Calendar.*

“During one spring, an individual song-thrush frequenting a favourite copse, after a certain round of time, trilled out most regularly some notes that conveyed so clearly the words ‘lady-bird ! lady-bird !’ that every one remarked the resemblance. He survived the winter, and in the ensuing season, ‘lady-bird, lady-bird,’ was still the burden of our evening song ; it then ceased, and we never heard this pretty modulation more.”—*Journal of a Naturalist*, 1830.

AUGUST FIRST.—LAMMAS DAY.

LAMMAS, I would have thee know, is a corruption of Loaf-Mass, and a remnant of a very old British custom of celebrating the gifts of Ceres. New wheat is called Lammas wheat.

Flowers.—"We continue still to have abundance of *Larks Heels*, *Indian Roses*, *Jasmin*, *Latter Larks Heels*, *Matricaria's*, *Sunflowers*, &c."—*The Compleat Gard'ner*, 1649.

"The *matricaria* is in English *Fedderfew* and *Feverfew*, taken from his force of driving away *Agues* . . . It is used both in drinks, and bound to the wrists with bay salt, and the powder of glasse stamped together, as a most singular experiment against the *ague*."—GERARD.

"In *August*, come *Plummes* of all sorts of Fruit; *Peares*; *Apricockes*; *Berberies*; *Filberds*; *Muske-Melons*; *Monks Hoods*, of all colours."—BACON.

"TO MAKE MARMALET OF ANY TENDER PLUM.

"Take your plums and boyl them between two dishes in a Chafing-dish of coals, then strain it and take as much Sugar as the Pulp do weigh, and put to it as much *Rose water*, and fair water as will melt it, that is half a pound of water to a pound of Sugar, and so boyl to a Candy height, then put the pulp into hot Sugar, with the pap of a roasted Apple. In like manner you must put rosted Apples to make *Paste Royal* of it, or else it will be tough in the drying."—*A Queen's Delight*, 1656.

AUGUST SECOND.—The weather has been very showery, and not over-warm, though when the sun comes out with any force, we hear the seed-pods of the broom crackling all over the field, like a fairy “feu-de-joie” from bush to bush. Orange *Alstroëmaria* has been flowering grandly, but is sadly beaten down by the rain. In the garden we have White *Campanulas*, *Roses*, Pink *Saxifrage*, *Snapdragon*, *Hollyhock*, French *Honeysuckle*; and, of course, red *Geraniums* and such good company. The lane is blue with *Harebells*; *Heather* and *Ling* are fair to see, and red *Poppies*; while over the hedges *Honeysuckle* sweetens the air. *Mulleins*, “my Lady’s Candles,” grow in great profusion in our lanes; I think this is such a beautiful flower if you examine it carefully. *Willow herbs* crimson and white and yellow *Bedstraw* are in flower. What shall I write of birds? The *Yaffle* has been laughing a little, for the rain, I suppose. We have been much interested in watching a very young lesser spotted *Woodpecker* being fed by the old bird. The parent bird made a most curious noise, and the young one sat like any other bird across the branch of a birch. On warmer days the *Greenfinch* screams at times, and the *Linnet* makes a note, but every day and all day the *Yellow-hammer* still sings. Our friends the *Titmice* seem to have left the garden altogether for the wood, where we hear them now and then passing the “time of day” with a *Nuthatch*. When August comes there seems a turn in the tide of months, and instead of going up hill we begin to go down.



AUGUST

AUGUST THIRD.

*"It was a chosen plott of fertile land,
Emongst wide waves sett, like a litle nest,
As if it had by Natures cunning hand
Bene choycely picked out from the rest,
And laid forth for ensample of the best :
No daintie flowre or herbe that growes on ground,
No arborett with painted blossomes drest
And smelling sweete, but there it might be found
To bud out faire, and throwe her sweete smels al arownd."*

—SPENSER.

*"Hark ! how the cheerefull birds do chaunt theyr Laies,
And carroll of loves praise.
The merry Larke hir matins sings aloft ;
The Thurst replyes ; the Mavis discant playes ;
The Ouzell shrills ; the Ruddeck warbles soft,
So goodly all agree with sweet consent
To this dayes merriment."*

—SPENSER.

"The daintiest Smells of Flowers, are out of these Plants whose Leaves smell not ; As Violets, Roses, Malt-flowers, Gilly-flowers, Pincks, Wood-bines, Vine-flowers, Apple-Bloomes, Bean-Bloomes, &c. The Cause is, for that where there is Heat and strength enough in the Plant, to make the Leaves Odorate, there the Smell of the Flower is rather Evanide and Weaker, than that of the Leaves ; as in Rose-Mary-Flowers, Lavender-Flowers, and Sweet-Briar-Roses."—BACON, *Sylva Sylvarum*, 1631.

AUGUST FOURTH.—"Many report how the Doves make use of Vervain, Swallows of Celandine, Linnets of Eye-bright, and Hawks of Hawkweed, for the recovery of their own, and their young one's sight."—*Adam in Eden, or Natures Paradise*, 1657.

I have written elsewhere of the Celandine. To-day I have found a flower of Vervain, and have studied its history. Gerard tells us it is also called "Juno's teares, Mercuries-moist-blood, Holy Herbe, Pigeons' Grasse, (because pigeons are delighted to be amongst it, as also to eat thereof)." He goes on to say, "Many odde old wives fables are written of Vervaine tending to witchcraft and sorcery, which you may reade elsewhere, for I am not willing to trouble your eares with reporting such trifles, as honest eares abhorre to heare." They report, saith Pliny, that "if the dining-roome be sprinkled with water in which the herbe hath been steeped the guests will be merrier." Pliny also writes, "Vervain is used in casting lots, telling fortunes, and foreshowing future events by way of prophesie. Of all hearbes there is none more honoured among the Romans than the sacred plant Vervaine. It is that hearbe our ambassadors use to carry with them when they declare war, and to give defiance unto our enemies. With this hearbe the festivall table of Jupiter is wont to be swept and cleaned with great solemnitie, with it our houses also be rubbed and halloweed for to drive away ill spirits."

It blooms in July and August on waste places, and is a small, insignificant plant (this flower of great repute) with lilac blossoms.

AUGUST FIFTH.

ROSE AND BUTTERFLY.

*“ A butterfly flew to the heart of a rose,
Ah ! more than he longed for the flower will yield !
Soft fans of Ariel close, unclose,
Unknowing how long he may dwell in a field.*

*He is here ! he is yonder ! the rose will weep,
‘ If you may not abide with us, child of air,
For ever enfolded in memory sleep,
Here in the heart of me, oh my fair ! ’*

*Chill wind breathes, with a mist and a rain,
Shedding the sweet petal, every one ;
Now where is the heart of the flower so fair,
And the winged blue summer elf, where is he gone ?*

*Rose-lover, remember, though delicate wings,
Deep-dyed in a wonderful azure of heaven,
Be turned into dust of inanimate things,
Very soon from your own life you will be forgiven ! ”*

—HON. RODEN NOEL.

AUGUST SIXTH.—Putting aside dwellers in the hearts of our large towns, there are few, even among children, who do not know the Common Swallow with his long forked tail, that so clearly distinguishes him from the rest of his tribe. A clever little mason is the Swallow, building his nest of wet mud, which soon hardens as it dries, on some ledge in a shed, or down a chimney. It must be confessed that in sandy districts where the soil is not suitable, the walls will crumble away as it dries, and work has to be recommenced, not once only but until the right sort of material is obtained, and the structure is firmly and solidly completed. Towards the end of this month Swallows begin to move southwards in flocks, and numbers of them may often be seen resting for a day or two on the roof of some house or barn, a lively, twittering clan. As they move onward these flocks increase in size, like a great stream as it nears the coast, and many of the birds will return to us again in April when the arrival of the first Swallow is almost as much an event as the note of the first Cuckoo. Alas! many leave us never to return, thousands are caught in nets as they top the passes of the Alps on their way to more genial climates, and many more dash themselves against the light-houses that fringe our coast on their return journey. It is said that Swallows are not so numerous here as they once were, but if that be a fact, they still return every spring in sufficient numbers to prevent our feeling any fear of their extinction at present.

AUGUST SEVENTH.

MEADOWSWEET COTTAGE.

DARLING MONICA,—I hasten to show you that I am growing wondrous practical. I have started a recipe book to gladden your heart. I have only copied in one as yet, and I have written it out for you too. Here it is. Date 1656. Old enough even for you, beloved.

“TO MAKE PASTE OF FLOWERS OF THE COLOUR OF
MARBLE TASTING OF NATURALL FLOWERS.

“Take every sort of pleasing Flowers, as Violets, Cowslips, Gilly-Flowers, Roses, or Marygolds, and beat them in a Mortar, each flower by itself with Sugar, till the Sugar becomes the colour of the flower, then put a little Gum Dragon steeped in water into it, and beat it into a perfect paste; and when you have half a dozen colours, every flower will take of his nature, then rowl the paste therein, and lay one piece upon another, in mingling sort, so rowl your paste in small rowls as bigge and as long as your finger, then cut it off the bignesse of a small nut, overthwart, and so rowl them thin, that you may see a knife through them, so dry them before the fire till they be dry.”

There, Monica, what do you say to that? I am going to give a Garden Party to *meet* this Paste of Flowers. Only I shall have to spell all the words in my invitation wrong so as to be in *accord*, as you would say. I mean to have a lobelia layer and a red geranium layer. You simply *must* come to this party, for you inspire me with all sorts of impossible ideas.—Your devoted
CORNINA.

AUGUST EIGHTH.—Such a glorious summer evening ! and the tobacco flower is open white and the sweet scent is wafted in to my window. “Tobacco or Henbane of Peru. The dry leaves are used to be taken in a pipe set on fire and sucked.”

SUMMER EVENING.

“Cooing sits the lonely dove,
 Calling home her absent love.
 With ‘Kirchup,’ ‘Kirchup,’ ’mong the wheats,
 Partridge distant Partridge greets ;
 Bats flit by in hood and cowl ;
 Through the barn-hole pops the owl ;
 From the hedge, in drowsy hum,
 Heedless buzzing beetles hum,
 Now the snail hath made his ring ;
 And the moth with snowy wing
 Circles round in winding whirls,
 Through sweet evening’s sprinkled pearls
 On each nodding rush besprent,
 Dancing in from bent to bent :
 Now to downy grasses clung,
 Resting for a while he’s hung.
 . . . From the grass or flowret’s cup,
 Quick the dew-drop bounces up.
 Now the blue fog creeps along,
 And the bird’s forgot his song :
 Flowers now sleep within their hoods ;
 Daisies button into buds ;
 From soiling dew the butter-cup
 Shuts his golden jewels up ;
 And the rose and woodbine they
 Wait again the smiles of day.”

—CLARE.

AUGUST NINTH.—The following passage of Milton's I believe I ought to have written in Spring. But I cannot leave it out, and in one beautiful season of the year, it is good to dream of another season. When the seed is sown it is well to think of ripened corn, and when the ears are full of grain it is right to think of the Sower. A great writer says of these lines, "I know of nothing parallel or comparable to this passage to be found among all the treasures of ancient or modern poetry."

*"Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleas'd: now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires: Hesperus that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw."*

AUGUST TENTH.—I do not know the author of the following lines, nor do I know where I found them ; but, right or wrong, I *cannot* leave them out of my Kalendar ; so if the author sees them I trust I may be forgiven.

*“ A garden is a lonesome thing, God wot !
 Rose plot,
 Fringed pool,
 Ferned grot—
 The veriest school
 Of peace ; and yet the fool
 Contends that God is not—
 Not God ! in gardens ! when the eve is cool ?
 Nay, but I have a sign !
 ’Tis very sure God walks in mine.”*

And the following came in a letter, copied, I believe, from a daily paper.

*“ And I dream that these garden-closes,
 With their shade and their sun-flecked sod,
 And their lilies, and bowers of roses,
 Were laid by the hand of God.*

*The kiss of the sun for pardon,
 The song of the birds for mirth—
 One is nearer God’s Heart in a garden
 Than anywhere else on earth.”*

AUGUST ELEVENTH.—Ruskin writes : “ You have heard it said—and I believe there is more than fancy even in that saying, but let it pass for a fanciful one—that flowers only flourish rightly in the garden of some one who loves them. I know you would like that to be true ; you would think it a pleasant magic if you could flush your flowers into brighter bloom by a kind look upon them ; nay, more, if your look had the power, not only to cheer, but to guard ; if you could bid the black blight turn away, and the knotted caterpillar spare ; if you could bid the dew fall upon them in the drought, and say to the south wind in the frost, ‘ Come, thou south wind, and breathe upon my garden ! ’ ”

In Mason’s poem on the garden, written in 1767, he describes the feeling a garden awoke in him :—

“ . . . and o’er my cradle drop’d
Those magic seeds of Fancy, which produce
A Poet’s feeling, and a Painter’s eye . . . ”

Again, later in the poem he writes :—

“ The art, which, varying forms and blending hues,
Gives that harmonious force of shade and light,
Which makes the landscape perfect. Art like this
Is only art, all else abortive toil.”

“ Gardening,” says an eighteenth-century writer, “ besides the emotions of beauty by means of regularity, order, proportion, colour, and utility, can raise emotions of grandeur, of sweetness, of gaiety, melancholy, wildeness, and even of surprise and wonder.”

AUGUST TWELFTH.—"The Floure of the Sun" is simply shining to-day.

*"The gaudy orient Sunflower from the crowd
Uplifts its golden circle."*

That describes it well. It is a "gaudy" flower, and it uplifts itself so far above its fellows in my border.

*"But one, the lofty follower of the sun,
Sad when he sets, shuts up her golden leaves,
Drooping all night, and when he warm returns,
Points her enamoured bosom to his ray."*

I do not love the sunflower, and yet I am willing to allow that no garden in late summer is perfect without it.

AH, SUNFLOWER.

*"Ah, Sunflower, weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun ;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done ;*

*Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sunflower wishes to go !"*

—WILLIAM BLAKE.

"August bears the burden, September the fruit."

"A wet August never brings dearth."

"It is reported, that to make *hasty Growing Coppice-Woods*, the way is to take *Willow, Sallon, Poplar, Alder*, of some seven yeares growth ; And set them not up right, but a slope, a reasonable depth under the ground ; And then instead of one Root, they will put forth many, and so carry more Shoots upon a Stemme."—BACON.

AUGUST THIRTEENTH.—To-day the mountain ash berries are scarlet in the sun. Great red bunches bearing down the branches. But alas! we shall not have them long. The trees are covered with birds feasting away greedily as if winter was already here. I think it really is disgraceful conduct on their part. They might have left the berries a little longer for me to gaze at. They look so glorious against the blue sky. I suppose they know full well that I shall feed them in the winter, and so they need not practise self-denial, and store such dainties against dark days. Blackbirds, missel-thrushes, and hawfinches are there. I fancy the baby wrynecks are feeding too, for I heard an old wryneck protesting. Also linnets and chaffinches and some of the smaller warblers are there. When they see me coming they do not fly away, but just hide behind the leaves, and peep out to see if I am angry or not. If I am angry they know I shall clap my hands, and that I have not the heart to do!

All the dear roses are beginning to bloom again, and the auratum lilies are coming, unfolding long white crinkled buds. My heart is heavy, for a rabbit has got into the garden and has eaten a conserve of monthly roses for his supper. Sometimes I think, like the man of old, I shall give up gardening and plant an orchard! There is still honeysuckle in the hedges and the heather is purple, royal purple. I have just seen a lovely border. Covering the wall at the back was Ceanothus in full flower. In front groups of white hollyhocks, scarlet cannas (with dark leaves), patches of pale yellow antirrhinum, and an edging of mauve heart's-ease.

AUGUST FOURTEENTH.—I do so love this picture of Ruth, and I thought of it to-day as I stood among the newly cut corn. I do not believe it is well known, and so must find a place for it in my Kalendar.

*“She stood breast high among the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.*

*On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripened ;—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.*

*Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veiled a light,
That had else been all too bright.*

*And her hat with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim ;
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks :*

*Sure, I said, Heav’n did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean ;
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.”*

—T. HOOD.

AUGUST FIFTEENTH.—To-day I have plucked my lavender, and after I have dried it in the sun I shall make it into a big cushion so that it may lie on my sofa and make my room sweet. Lavender is always “found in the Gardens of most Women, that pretend to good huswifery.” I do not pretend to good huswifery, but I love my lavender. Here is W. Coles’ description in *Adam in Eden* (1657): “The whole Plant is of a strong sweet smell, but especially the heads of the Flowers, which are much used to be put into linnen and apparel, as also into Nosegays and Posies, because they are very pleasing and delightful to the brain, which is much refreshed with its sweetness.” That is why I place it on my sofa. Another name for lavender is “Cast-me-down.” Culpepper, too, tells us it is so good for the brain. Lyte differs slightly: “The Floures of Lavender alone, or with Cinnamon, Nutmegs, and Cloves do cure the beating of the harte.” Ah! well the heart influences the brain, at least with women, so we will not complain. Here is a recipe from *A Queen’s Delight*:—

“CONSERVE OF THE FLOWERS OF LAVENDER.

“Take the flowers being new so many as you please, and beat them with three times their weight of White Sugar, in a Marble Mortar with a Wooden Pestal. Keep it in a Gally or vessell of earth well glazed. It may be preserved for one year or two.”

Lavender was named from *lavare*, to wash, for the ancients used it in their baths. I keep little bags of lavender among all my clothes, as doubtless do other good housewives!

AUGUST SIXTEENTH.—I have been wandering up the lane on to the common and have returned with my arms full of heather, ling, and bell-heather. The purple knolls simply shone in the sun, and with the blue pines and a white field of rye in seed made a picture any artist would enjoy. I found a good description of Heather in Lyte's *Herbal*. A wonderful translation of Dodoens, 1578:—

“ . . . There is in this Countrie two kindes of Heath, one whiche beareth his flowers amongst the stemmes, and is called log Heath. The other bearing his flowers in tutteys or tufts at the toppes of the branches, the whiche is called smal Heath. The Flowers be lyke smal knoppes or buttons parted in foure, of a fayre carnation colour, and sometimes (but very seldome) white, growing amongst the branches from the middle upwarde even to the toppe.” This is evidently Ling.

“The second kinde of Heath is also a little base plant, with many little twigges, or smal slender shutes comming from the roote, of a reddish browne colour with very small leaves, in fashion not unlike the leaves of common Thyme, but much smaller and tenderer, the flowers growne at the toppe of the strigges or twigges, five or sixe in a company together, hanging downewardes, of colour Carnation and red, of making long and rounde, hollowe within, and open at the ende lyke a little tonnell, smaller than a Cornell which is the fruit of a Cornell tree. The roote is tender, and creeping amongst, and putteth forth in divers places many new twigges or strigges.”

“Name : Heath, Hather, Lyng.”

AUGUST SEVENTEENTH.—It saddens me to hear the reaper at work, and see wave after wave of golden corn laid low. The breeze can no longer pass over the moving field, or clouds cast shadows and turn the gold to purple. But when the sun shines I suppose we must deem it good to know the harvest is gathered. A wheat field near at hand is begun to-day, but some oats have been cut before this and stand in shocks. The last loads of hay and peas have been carried. There will be a great aftermath this year with all the rain. The flower is falling from the Spanish Chestnut and makes the garden wondrous untidy. After all gardening is heart-breaking work ; the jobs are never done ; there is no rest or contentment. I mean, of course, in gardening, not in a garden.

*“ ’Twas one of the charmed days
When the genius of God doth flow,
The wind may alter twenty ways,
A tempest cannot blow :
It may blow north, it still is warm ;
Or south, it still is clear ;
Or east, it smells like a clover farm ;
Or west, no thunder fear.*

*For Nature ever faithful is
To such as trust her faithfulness.
When the forest shall mislead me,
When the night and morning lie,
When sea and land refuse to feed me,
’Twill be time enough to die ;
The will yet my mother yield
A pillow in her greenest field.”*

—EMERSON.

AUGUST EIGHTEENTH.—Haste to me, Cynthia, I have found a recipe for thee to cure the Sunburn. I would fain have thy face nought but lilies and roses. Hie thee to the meadowe and plucke thee a tussie of Smoke Flower and bathe thy cheeks.

*“ And Fumitory too, a name
Which Superstition holds to fame,
Whose red and purple mottled Flowers
Are cropped by maids in weeding hours,
To boil in water, milk, and whey,
For washes on a holiday,
To make their beauty fair and sleek,
And scare the tan from Summer’s cheek ;
And oft the dame will feel inclined,
As childhood’s memory comes to mind,
To turn her look away, and spare
The blooms it loved to gather there.”*

—CLARE.

Clare doubtless had been dipping into the work of the old Herbalist, for Gerard writes: “It (fumitory) is oftentimes boyled in whay, and in this manner it helpeth in the end of Spring and in Summer time,” those who are troubled as thou art. Bunnikens is a fine herbe indeed. Treat it not with scorn and a lifting of thy upper lip. Cynthia, thou shouldst hearken to me, and keep thee within doors, as becometh a modest maid.

“ A WATER GOOD FOR SUN-BURNING.

“Take water drawne off the Vine dropping, the flowers of White Thorn, Bean flowers, Water Lilly flowers, Garden Lilly flowers, Elder flowers, and Tansie flowers, Althea flowers, the whites of Egges, French Barley.”—*A Queen’s Delight.*

AUGUST NINETEENTH. — Here is a morning verse for us, writ in 1577.

*“ You that have spent the silent night,
In sleepe and quiet rest,
And joye to see the cheereful lyght
That ryseth in the East :
Now cleare your voyce, now chere your hart,
Come helpe me nowe to singe :
Each willing wight come beare a part,
To prayse the heavenly King.”*

—GASCOIGNE.

*“ A sacred burden is the life ye bear ;
Look on it, bear it solemnly,
Stand up beneath it steadfastly ;
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin,
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.”*

—FRANCES KEMBLE.

*“ Do what you can, being what you are,
Shine like a glow-worm if you cannot like a star,
Work like a pulley, if you cannot like a crane,
Be a wheel-greaser, if you cannot drive a train.”*

This is my mood to-day ! The little things of life are uppermost, and it is difficult to idealise the “daily round,” which proves that one is not in tune with the Infinite. Such hours must come, and one rises the higher the moment one breasts the wave. “Harness your waggon to a star,” and all will be well. But the star does not do away with the ruts in life’s pathway, though it may lift one over !

AUGUST TWENTIETH.—I have had a bunch of myrtle sent me to-day. It is a flower I always touch with reverence. I know not why. By the ancients it was made an emblem of Love, and dedicated to Beauty, hence its place in bridal bouquets. "From the delightful perfume of the myrtle, the delicacy of its blossoms, and the glossy green of its perpetual foliage, it seems destined to ornament the forehead of beauty, and the temple of Venus, who was crowned with myrtle by the loves, after her victory over Juno and Pallas." The following passage I find in an old book is full of interest: "Myrtles were amongst the first trees that the people planted in the public places of Rome, to presage future events; there were two sacred myrtles growing before the temple of Quirinus, one of the oldest edifices in Rome, and erected in honour of Romulus. One of these myrtles was called *Patritia*, the myrtle of the nobility, and the other *Plebeia*, the myrtle of the commonalty; and as either of these trees flourished and decayed, so the success of these opposite parties was prognosticated. The temple of Quirinus was repaired under the consul Lucius Papirius Cursor, in the year 306 before Christ, when the first sun-dial that had been seen at Rome was set up." Myrtle-wreaths were worn as laurel or bay wreaths used to be, by those generals who obtained victories without bloodshed. It is said that Sir Walter Raleigh first brought the myrtle to England from Spain. Turner mentions it not (1568), and Gerard says it is a plant of late introduction. Evelyn mentions in 1678 a myrtle eighty years old, requiring just a little dry straw in winter thrown upon it.

AUGUST TWENTY-FIRST.—I wish I grew more hollyhocks in my garden ; they are such lovely flowers. Pale pink hollyhocks with pink mallows, and misty gypsophila. Parkinson writes, “Hollihocks both single and double, of many and sundry colours, yeeld out their flowers like Roses in their tall branches, like Trees, to sute you with flowers, when almost you have no other to grace out your garden.”

The nasturtiums are still in full bloom. I should like to have a whole garden of nasturtiums. It would be like the glory of a sunset sky the livelong day. In the *Compleat Gard'ner* (1649) I find the following : “Nasturces, the *Leaf* of it is pretty large, and the *Flower* of an Orange Colour ; the figure of the *Seed* is a little pyramidal divided by *ribs*, having all its supersicies engraven and wrought all over, being of a gray colour, inclining to a light Cinamon.”

Prithee, Cynthia, wilt thou walk with me in Constance's Dutch garden ? Over the pergola hang yellow roses, soft white clematis, and heavy tangles of blue clematis, the flowers jostling one another to gain the sunlight. Up the yew hedges climb the scarlet tropæolum, like tongues of flame. On the old moss-covered wall, some late flowers of wisteria are hanging, and all the box-edged beds are a glory of colour. Begonias, salvias, geraniums, and many more. Tall auratum lilies shine against a dark background. Oh, Cynthia, I love that Dutch garden ! I pray thee love it too !

AUGUST TWENTY-SECOND.—The sun is setting behind the firs. A stillness fills the land. As I look towards the sun a feeling of nearness fills my heart. It is almost as if the golden gate must open and the song of the heavenly host be heard in the air. Spenser's lines come suddenly to me.

*“And is there care in heaven? And is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures bace,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is; yet much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts. But O! th' exceeding grace
Of highest God that loves his creatures so,
And all his workes with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed Angels he sends to and fro,
To serve the wicked man, to serve his wicked foe.*

*How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pineons cleave
The flitting skyes, like flying Pursuivant,
Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward,
And their bright Squadrons round us plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward.
O! why should hevny God to men have such regard?”*

“And all for love and nothing for reward.” That is lesson enough for one day. For myself I think “duty” should be always lost in “love.” There is no duty in the New Testament. A bold assertion indeed; but I dare aver that what is done only from a sense of duty is never so well done. Flowers blossom in obedience to the sun's demand.

AUGUST TWENTY-THIRD.

*"Life (priest and poet say) is but a dream ;
 I wish no happier one than to be laid
 Beneath some cool syringa's scented shade,
 Or wavy willow, by the running stream,
 Brimful of moral, where the Dragon-fly
 Wanders as careless and content as I."*

God's acre in the country is such a perfect resting-place. With the blue sky above, and the song of birds, and scent of flowers in the air.

*"Oh ! plant them above me, the soft, and the bright,
 The touch'd with the sunset's crimson light,
 The warm with the earliest breath of the Spring,
 The sweet with the sweep of the West wind's wing ;
 Let the green bough and the red leaf wave—
 Plant the glad Rose-tree upon my Grave."*

"She died of the breath of the city," said a peasant woman as she passed me, "but we brought her home and laid the meadow-gold upon her breast." Oh, the sadness of it ! She loved the wild flowers so. *"She died of the breath of the city."*

*"Woods cut againe doe grow,
 Budde both the Rose and Daizie,
 Winter done,
 But wee once dead no more doe
 See the Sunne."*

Is it not rather we live *for ever* in the Sunne ? All the shadow and shade lost in the Light. No more tears, and no more partings.

AUGUST TWENTY-FOURTH.—To-day the jasmine is still in flower, and peeps in at my window. It is one of the flowers that I love the best.

*“Young blossomed Jessamines ;
Such fragrant flowers do give most odorous smell,”*

as Spenser writes. “Oh, the faint, sweet smell of the Jasmine flower.” It is an old-fashioned flower, for Turner in 1557 calls it “our comen jesemine,” and Gerard says, “Jasmine is fostered in gardens, and is used for arbors, and to cover banquetting houses in gardens ; it groweth not wilde in England, that I can understande of, though master Lyte be of another opinion ; the white jasmine is common in most places of Englande.” A pretty description I find in *Sylva Florifera* (1832) I must copy here. “This sweet emblem of amiability is always acceptable wherever we meet it. It graces alike the lowly casement, and the proud parterre of the rich and gay. . . . Its modesty pleases, and its fragrance charms, in all situations ; like those whose happy dispositions and amiable manners seem to make them the bond of society, by the grace and facility with which they accommodate themselves to all situations and circumstances. The pretty face of the jasmine flower is only surpassed in loveliness by the fair whose countenance is brightened by amiability.” Some old writers affirm that jasmine is far more fragrant at night.

*“Many a perfume breathed
From plants that wake when others sleep,
From timid jasmine buds, that keep
Their odour to themselves all day,
But, when the sunlight dies away,
Let the delicious secret out
To every breeze that roams about.”*

AUGUST TWENTY-FIFTH.

*"O my life, have we not had seasons
That only said, Live and rejoice?
That asked not for causes and reasons,
But made us all feelings and voice?
When we went with the winds in their blowing,
When nature and we were peers,
And we seemed to share in the flowing
Of the inexhaustible years?
Have we not from the earth drawn juices
Too fine for earth's sordid uses?
Have I heard, have I seen
All I feel, all I know?
Doth my heart overween?
Or could it have been
Long ago."*

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

It was the "joy of living" in the long ago. To-day—to-day, the joy is deeper, more perfect; but our season says more than "Live and rejoice." To some it says "Live and suffer," only be brave always, patient always. And the suffering? Why, the suffering brings us nearer to the One who suffered in the "long ago." At the same time it is possible to rejoice always, because there is always so much to rejoice over. So much sunshine, songs of birds, beautiful flowers, the west wind, and all Nature's loveliness. When one begins to think and realise, we find, after all, that the "joy of living" really exists, and that we are still young as we were in the long ago.

AUGUST TWENTY-SIXTH.—I have been thinking much of what the birds say ; they have so many different notes, and so many different ways of singing. Gilbert White gives a good description of what I would fain explain.

“The notes of our hawks much resemble those of the king of birds. Owls have very expressive notes ; they hoot in a fine vocal sound, much resembling the *vox humana*, and reducible by a pitch-pipe to a musical key. This note seems to express complacency and rivalry among the males ; they use also a quick call and a horrible scream ; and can snore and hiss when they mean to menace. Ravens, besides their loud croak, can exert a deep and solemn note that makes the woods to echo ; the amorous sound of a crow is strange and ridiculous ; rooks, in the breeding season, attempt sometimes, in the gaiety of their hearts, to sing, but with no great success ; doves coo in an amorous and mournful manner, and are emblems of despairing lovers ; the woodpecker sets up a sort of loud and hearty laugh ; the fern-owl, or goat-sucker, from the dusk till day-break, serenades his mate with the chattering of castanets. All the tuneful *passeres* express their complacency by sweet modulations, and a variety of melody. The swallow . . . by a shrill alarm, bespeaks the attention of the other *hirundines*, and bids them be aware that the hawk is at hand.”

Of course the robin has a very individual note, and the wren is ever determined to make himself heard. This is a great study and deserves further attention.

AUGUST TWENTY-SEVENTH.—To-day we have a sad controversy, verging on ill-temper, and all because we cannot settle the question, full of interest and sentiment, as to what plant or shrub answers to the name of "Burning Bush." Miranda is positive that Dittany is the *real* Burning Bush, and will not listen to reason. Perilla avows it is the Sumach, while I quote from *The Theory and Practise of Gardening*, written in 1712. "The *Pyra-cantha*, which the *French* call *Le Buisson Ardent*, is pretended to be the same with that, in which Scripture tells us God appeared to *Moses*. It does not grow very tall, and its Leaf is very much like that of the Plum Tree. Its red Berries, which continue on it in the Winter, and which, at a Distance, make it look as though it were full of Fire, have given it the name of the *Burning Bush*; 'tis in these Berries its Seed lies." It is useless striving to ascertain the truth, for nobody is agreed.

Burning Bush, *Dictamesus Fraxinella*. "It is said the plant gives off so large a quantity of essential oil that the air around it becomes inflammable, and will ignite if a light be brought near."—J. BRITTEN, F.C.S.

AUGUST TWENTY-EIGHTH.—This is the day I have dedicated to the Marygold ; I know not why ; I love it not, and yet I have gleanings about this flower which I cannot leave out of my Kalendar.

*“ Mark how the bashful morn in vain
Courts the amorous Marigold,
With sighing blasts and weeping rain ;
Yet she refuses to unfold.
But when the planet of the day
Approacheth with his powerful ray,
Then she spreads, then she receives,
His warmer beams into her leaves.”*

—CAREW.

*“ How daily every morning she displays
Her open breast when Phæbus spreads his rays ;
How, when he down declines, she weeps and mourns,
Bedew'd as 'twere with tears till he returns.”*

—WITHERS.

The marygold is one of the “plants of the sun,” the “golden flower” of the ancients. Lyte writes that “it hath pleasant bright yellow floures, the which do close at the setting of the sunne, and do spread and open againe at the sun rising.” It is the “Mary budde that shutteth with the light.”

*“ Such virtue have my marigolds,
Within their stalkes unfolde,
That Phæbus with his burning beames
Cannot their leaves unfolde.”*

(1572.)

AUGUST TWENTY-NINTH. — There is nought to me so pathetic as to turn the leaves of an old book and to find therein a faded flower, placed there by a hand which has no longer life in its touch.

“Gather ye Rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.”

I have just found a Forget-me-not between the pages of an old *Herbal*. Scorpion Grass, as it must have been called then. Love was the same in the olden days : it was then as now.

“Blue as the sky were the simple flowers
We gathered together that day,
Tho’ dead and dry they recall the hours
Of a happiness pass’d away.

They grew midst the rushes so tall and green,
Low down in the sedges cool,
We drew them out of their home, unseen,
In a fortunate fairy pool.

And you gave me some and I took them home,
And treasured those blossoms blue,
Tho’ never a flower was needed less
To be given to me by you.”

The whole of a life-history may be hidden in a rose-leaf. The sight of a flower found suddenly as an old book is brought to light brings a memory which we thought was dead and lost in the years that are gone.

AUGUST THIRTIETH.—Perilla, sweet, I have been longing for thee to-day. All the flowers in my garden are listening for thy footstep. They know full well it is thy birthday. The auratum lilies are taller than thou art, and the whiteness of their leaves between the gold and brown rivals thy cheek. Then, Perilla, my roses! I could gather thee a garland for to-day; they bloom only for thee. It must have been for thee that dear old Parson Herrick wrote the lines I here pen for thy pleasure.

*“Noone-day and Midnight shall at once be seene :
Trees, at one time, shall be both sere and green :
Fire and water shall together lye
In one-self-sweet-conspiring sympathie :
Summer and Winter shall at one time show
Ripe eares of corne, and up to th’ eares in snow :
Seas shall be sandlesse ; Fields devoid of grasse :
Shapelesse the world (as when all Chaos was)
Before, my deare Perilla, I will be
False to my vow, or fall away from thee.”*

There, what thinkest thou of that? Art thou satisfied at last, or dost thou long for greater protestations? Come thou and walk by my sweet border. Cull thee a bunch of sweet nicotina, sweet geranium, cherry pie, gilly flowers, “old man,” rosemary and rue. Crush strawberry leaves beneath thy dainty feet. Hold sweet verbena in thy hands. And all the while a turtle-dove thinking that Spring-time is here because thou art, purrs from the pine a love that even the flowers cannot give thee.

AUGUST THIRTY-FIRST.—Love-lies-Bleeding is now in flower. I do not love it, no, not as Gerard loved it in the long ago. This is what he says of it :—

Floure-Gentle, Passevelours, Floramour, Velvet Flower, Amaranthus. Being of the colour of blood it stoppeth blood. Hence its common name. “It farre exceedeth my skill to describe the beautie and excellencie of this rare plant, and I thinke the pencil of the most curious painter, will be at a stay, when he shall come to set it downe in his lively colours . . . for in few words everie leafe resembleth in colour the most faire and beautifull feather of a Parat especially those feathers that are mixed with most sundry colours, as a stripe of red, and a line of yellow, a dash of white, and a rib of greene colour, which I cannot with words set forth, such are the sundry mixtures of colours that nature hath bestowed in her Greatest jolitie upon this flower.”

*“Never enliven’d with the liveliest ray,
That fosters growth or checks or cheers decay,
Nor by the heaviest rain-drops more deprest ;
This flower, that first appeared as Summer’s guest,
Reserves her beauty ’mid autumnal leaves,
And to her mournful habits fondly cleaves,
When files of stateliest plants have ceased to bloom,
One after one submitting to their doom.”*

—WORDSWORTH.

“The flowers are not properly flowers, but tufts, very beautiful to behold, but of no smell, of reddish colour ; if you bruise them they yield juice of the same colour ; being gathered they keep their beauty a long time.”—CULPEPPER.

SEPTEMBER FIRST.—“As for *Flowers* we have now great store of *Tube roses*, *Asters*, or *Oculus Christi's*, of *Flower Gentles*, *Velvet Flowers*, or *Amaranthus*, of *Indian Gilliflowers*, or *French Marygolds*, *Marvels of Peru*, *Lawrel*, or *Bay Roses*, and some *Ciclamens*.”—*The Compleat Gard'ner*.

“In *September* come *Grapes* ; *Apples* ; *Poppies* of all colours ; *Peaches* ; *Melo - Cotonés* ; *Nectarines* ; *Cornelians* ; *Wardens* ; *Quinces*.”—BACON.

We can boast of a Michaelmas Daisy garden in full bloom. Montbretias, late Lilies, different sorts of China asters and Autumn crocus, besides late summer flowers still flowering. The agapanthus is throwing up great blue heads of bloom, and the auratum lilies are still out against the green of the wood. Alas ! we have no Cornelians, or long cherries, but we know of a few Quinces.

“TO MAKE A CAKE THE WAY OF THE ROYAL PRINCESS,
THE LADY ELIZABETH, DAUGHTER TO KING CHARLES
THE FIRST.

“Take half a peck of Flower, half a pinte of Rose water, a pinte of Ale yest, a pinte of Cream, boyl it, a pound and a half of Butter, six Egges (leave out the whites), four pound of Currants, one half pound of Sugar, one Nutmeg, and a little Salt, work it very well, and let it stand half an hour by the fire, and then work it again, and then make it up, and let it stand an hour and a half in the Oven ; let not your Oven be too hot.”—*A Queen's Delight*, 1656.



SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER SECOND.—"The squirrel is very common amongst us ; he hath a very large tail, which serveth indifferently for a shadow and a covering : he layeth up his food in the Summer for the Winter ; he eateth often but drinketh very little ; he layeth up what he cannot eat and loveth sleep, which maketh him very fat : he liveth in hollow trees, where they build their neasts, and bring forth their young ; his tail serveth him for wings, which he useth often wagging of it when he is to leap on any thing ; if he is to go through any water, he will get upon a piece of wood, his tail serveth him instead of a sail, so swimming over, carrying his food in his mouth. She hath divers holes and caverns in the earth where she liveth, and each of these hath several waies to it, which she stoppeth up with her tail ; when the wind bloweth, if the wind is in the *North*, she stoppeth the hole towards the *North*, and leaveth that hole open which is *Southward*. Some tell us (but how true I know not) that he can fore-see a storm, or any tempestuous water, a long while before it cometh, and will provide against it, stopping up her little holes that lye to that point of the compass that the tempest will come at."

—*The History of Brutes*, 1670.

SEPTEMBER THIRD.—I have been reading the curious old poem, "The Owl," by Michael Drayton. It is a dream. First the owl "was set to sleep whilst every bird did sing." All the birds come round him to reproach him.

"*Fie, quoth the linnet, tripping in the spray :
Rouse thee, thou sluggish bird, this mirthful May,
Take thy delight in yonder goodly tree
Where the sweet Merle, and warbling Mavis be.
Next quoth the Tit mice which at hand did sit,
' Shake off this moody melancholy fit.'*"

Then the owl makes a long speech beginning—

"*O all you feather'd Choristers of Nature."*

After the speech many birds are mentioned.

"*The envious Crow. The hateful Buzzard.
The ravenous Kite.
The greedy Raven, that for death doth call.
The thievish Daw, the dessembling Pie.
The Woodpecker, whose hard'ned beak hath broke,
And pierc'd the heart of many a solid oak :
The Kingly Eagle
The sharp-neb'd Hecco.
The Lark, the Linnet, and the gentler sort.
The warbling Throstle Cock,
The Ouzel and the Nightingale."*

Then the Eagle speaks—

"*. . . I care not for contempt, I seek not fame,
Knowledge I love, and glory in the same."*

He gives a long oration, taking the side of the owl. All the birds speak in turn. The owl pleads for mercy with the eagle, who ends by making the birds feel the owl's worth. In the poem we read of the natural love of the falcon for the owl. The poem was written about the year 1563.

SEPTEMBER FOURTH.

*“ Chide me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought ;
Every aster in my hand
Goes home laden with a thought.*

*There was never mystery
But 'tis figured in the flowers ;
Was never secret history
But birds tell it in the bowers.*

*One harvest from thy field
Homeward brought the oxen strong ;
A second crop thy acres yield,
Which I gather in a song.”*

—EMERSON.

“I was walking alone in my garden ; there was great stillness among the branches and flowers, and more than common sweetness in the air ; I heard a low and pleasant sound, and I knew not whence it came. At last I saw the broad leaf of a flower move, and underneath I saw a procession of creatures, of the size and colour of green and grey grasshoppers, bearing a body laid out on a rose-leaf, which they buried with songs, and then disappeared. It was a fairy funeral.”—WILLIAM BLAKE.

SEPTEMBER FIFTH.

OAK.—“ *I am the Roof-tree and the keel ;
I bridge the seas for woe and weal.*”

FIR.—“ *High o’er the lordly oak I stand,
And drive him on from land to land.*”

ASH.—“ *I heft my brother’s iron bane ;
I shaft the spear and build the wain.*”

POPLAR.—“ *The war-shaft and the milking-bowl
I make, and keep the hay-wain whole.*”

APPLE-TREE.—“ *I bowed my head to Adam’s will ;
The cups of toiling men I fill.*”

VINE.—“ *I draw the blood from out the earth ;
I store the sun for winter mirth.*”

ORANGE-TREE.—“ *Amidst the greenness of my might
My odorous lamps hang round and bright.*”

FIG-TREE.—“ *I who am little among trees
In honey-making mate the bees.*”

MULBERRY-TREE.—“ *Love’s lack hath dyed my berries red ;
For love’s attire my leaves are shed.*”

PEAR-TREE.—“ *High o’er the mead-flower’s hidden feet
I bear aloft my burden sweet.*”

BAY.—“ *Look on my leafy boughs, the crown
Of living song and dead renown.*”

—WILLIAM MORRIS.

SEPTEMBER SIXTH.

CHERRY RIPE.

*“ There is a garden in her face
Where roses and white lilies grow ;
A heavenly paradise is that place
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow where none may buy,
Till ‘ Cherry ripe ’ themselves do cry.*

*These cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row,
Where when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rose-buds filled with snow ;
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy,
Till ‘ Cherry ripe ’ themselves do cry.*

*Her eyes like angels watch them still,
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt with eye or hand
Those sacred cherries to come nigh
Till ‘ Cherry ripe ’ themselves do cry.”*

“ Septembre est le mai d’automne.”

*“ September, blow soft,
Till the fruit’s in the loft.”*

*“ When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread :
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of ‘ Ha, ha, he.’ ”*

—Laughing Song. WILLIAM BLAKE.

SEPTEMBER SEVENTH.—“I prithee spend thy days in painting Nature, nothing is so good for thee, I trow ; for it brings thee face to face with the Beautiful, and lifts thee above the common run of petty things on to another plane. Surely it brings thee into communion with all that is good.”

“They will find that the Study of Nature is ever attended with pleasing reflections : that the study of Botany, in particular, independent of its immediate use, is as healthful as it is innocent. That it beguiles the tediousness of the road, that it furnishes amusement at every footstep of the solitary walk, and, above all, that it leads to pleasing reflections on the bounty, the wisdom, and the power of the Great Creator.”—(1796.)

“To paint the Universal Emblem of delicate splendor in its own hues, the pencil should be dipped in the tints of Aurora, when arising amidst her aerial glory. Human art can neither colour nor describe so fair a flower. Venus herself feels a rival in the rose, whose beauty is composed of all that is exquisite and graceful.”

*“A canvas which when touched by Autumn’s hand,
Shall gleam with dusky gold, or russet rays.”*

—MASON.

“Painting transports us into the World Beautiful, where we may be the blessed means of bringing others into closer communion with Nature.”

SEPTEMBER EIGHTH.

*"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever :
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, we are wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways
Made for our searching ; yea, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sleep ; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season ;*

*All lovely tales that we have heard or read ;
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink."*

—KEATS.

SEPTEMBER NINTH.—How one fears a frost ! And all on account of the dahlias. They make a goodly show now, and I have been won round to love them. Just the perfect cactus dahlias—soft pink, mauve, yellow. There are rose-colour ones and orange glories. Ah me ! I never thought I should fall victim to such flowers !

“The Dahlia,” writes Maund, “becomes an object of agreeable interest to every one who possesses a garden, unless that possessor be one whose mind is so chained down to mother earth, that he never can raise an eye of satisfaction upon the beauties of her vegetable children. These pourtray too much happiness, too much of the spontaneous loveliness of nature, to meet even the placid contemplation of some few—very few—morbific souls.” I must send for more Dahlias for my dear garden. I must be careful where I send, remembering Parkinson’s advice when he wrote of Lupins. “Lupins—Figge beanes—other foolish names have been given it, as Virginia Roses, and the like, by knavish Gardiners and others, to deceive men, and make them believe they were finders out or great preservers of rarities : as you would therefore avoyde knaves and deceivers, beware of these manner of people, whereof the skirts of our towne are too pitifully pestered.”

SEPTEMBER TENTH.—“The flower is the light of the plant, just as leaves may be considered as its shade. This light may be a blue and cool one; it may even be found, as in some Pansies, nearly approaching blackness; but still it has a vividness, a stimulating power, far exceeding that of the green, which is the most restful tint we know, and it generally expresses sun-force in responsive vividness of hue, in splendour and glow of colour, in that higher and more glorious force of freshness which is too much for the leaves to bear. Green petals we seldom like to see. They betoken a comparatively low type, and are often associated with poisonous and suspicious qualities, especially when found amongst the more highly-developed flowers. The beauty we expect of petals is to be expressed in brighter tones, dull tones like black or brown being extremely rare.”—FORBES WATSON.

At this moment a weasel sneaks through the bushes, and I turn to the description in the *History of Brutes* written in 1670. “The *weasel* is no less crafty than it is timerous; and although she bringeth forth her young ones in the house, she often changeth her neast, lest being discovered, her young ones should be taken away: some tell us, that if her young ones at any time were hurt, she seeketh out for some herb proper for the distemper, with which she cureth them. . . . The field or wild *Weasel* is somewhat larger than the *domestick*: by the way I shall note this that the *Weasel* will become tame, if their teeth be rubbed with *garlick*.”

SEPTEMBER ELEVENTH.

*“A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,
Little about it stirring save a brook !
A sleepy land where under the same wheel
The same old rut would deepen year by year.”*

Yes, they are picking now round about us. In the splendid autumn sunshine men, women, and children are standing in groups round the baskets, plucking the beautiful green hops from the long tangled greenery. From early morning till the cry resounds through the hop-yard “No more poles”—and the little ones shout with joy, for another day’s work is done—the hoppers are busy, and scarce pause for a moment, so anxious are they to cover black line after black line in their baskets. The toil only lasts a certain amount of days, so what matters it if backs ache and hands grow weary ; it means rent, and it means boots for the little ones. It is a very health-giving toil, too, and sleep comes readily to those who have worked all day. There is a wonderful sound of life as you approach a hop-field, a hum as from a human hive, and in spite of hard work merriment is rife, and the young ones bandy jokes and the old folk smile, as they think of the days when they too were young and life was bathed in sunshine. There is no prettier sight than a hop-field when the hops are being picked. A glint of red here and there, a rosy-cheeked child fast asleep, blue sky up above, all among the green tangled drapery.

SEPTEMBER TWELFTH.—Alas ! the trees begin to turn.

*“ Wood berries
That blush in scarlet ripeness through the dew ”*

are to be seen everywhere. Does the red and gold herald the white of winter ? Ah me ! I will not believe it yet. Flowers are fair still and the year is not *very* old.

*“ Below me trees unnumbered rise,
Beautiful in various dyes ;
The glowing Pine, the Poplar blue,
The yellow Beech, the sable yew,
The slender Fir that taper grows,
The sturdy oak with broad spread boughs.”*

On the commons the pretty dwarf gorse (*ulex nanus*) is in flower, mixing with the heather, which has turned a rusty brown, here and there patches of crimson telling of flowers which will not own to the fact that summer is past.

AUTUMNAL TWILIGHT. A SONNET.

*“ I stood at sunset on a little hill,
O’erhung and garlanded with tall Beech trees ;
The West was clothed in gold, and not a breeze
Disturbed the scene—all was unearthly still ;
And pleasant was the air, though somewhat chill,
As wont upon a clear September eve,
Methought ’twas then impossible to grieve,
For placid thought o’ercame the sense of ill,
And a deep Lethe o’er the senses brought.
I gazed upon the waters—on the flowers—
The sky—the stirless woods—the silent leaves—
These, and the field-bird’s cry among the sheaves,
Flashed back departed childhood on my thought,
And all the joys that then, dear one, were ours.”*

SEPTEMBER THIRTEENTH.

*“Go to the proof! behold what Temple call’d
A perfect garden. There thou shalt not find
One blade of verdure, but with aching feet
From terrace down to terrace shalt descend,
Step following step, by tedious flight of stairs :
On leaden platforms now the noon-day sun
Shall scorch thee ; now the dank arcades of stone
Shall chill thy fervour ; happy, if at length
Thou reach the orchard, where the sparing turf
Thro’ equal lines all centring in a point
Yields thee a softer tread.”*

—From Mason’s “English Garden,” 1767.

From the same.

*“Yet was his soul all Peace ; a garden’s care
His only thought, its charms his only pride.”*

Thus writes Horace Walpole : “There is a more imminent danger that threatens the present, as it has ever done, all taste. I mean the pursuit of variety. A modern French writer has in a very affected phrase given a just account of this, I will call it, distemper. He says : ‘L’Ennui du beau amene le goût du singulier. . . .’ We have discovered the point of perfection. We have given the true model of gardening to the world ; let other countries mimic or corrupt our taste ; but let it reign here on its verdant throne, original by its elegant simplicity, and proud of no other art than that of softening Nature’s harshness and copying her graceful touch.”

SEPTEMBER FOURTEENTH.—This is Holy Rood Day, so I have dedicated the Passion Flower unto it. But first I will give you an “Old Wives Prayer” for to-day writ by Master Herrick :—

“*Holy Rood, come forth and shield
Us i’ th’ citie and the field ;
Safely guard us, now and aye,
From the blast that burns by day ;
And the sounds that us affright
In the dread of dampish night.
Drive all hurtful Fiends us fro,
By the times the Cocks first crow.*”

Evidently in his day people did not sleep very well !

I always loved the story of the Passion Flower and am ready to believe the legend. But Parkinson will not have it at any price. This is what he says : “Some superstitious Jesu—ite would faine make me beleeve, that in the flower of this plant are to be seene all the markes of our Saviours Passion ; and therefore call it *Flos Passionis* : and to that end have caused figures to be drawne and printed, with all the parts proportioned out, as thornes, nailes, speare, whippe, pillar, &c., in it, and all as true as the Sea burnes, which you may well perceive by the true figure, taken to the life of the plant, compared to the figures set forth by the Jesu—ites.”

I like the expression, “*as true as the Sea burnes.*” Evidently Parkinson had not an atom of Romance in his whole nature. He is for ever laughing at “old wives’ tales” and “idle superstition.” From my heart I am sorry for him.

SEPTEMBER FIFTEENTH.—I have found in an old book an account of certain flowers which tell the weather. If the African Marygold opens not its flowers in the morning about seven o'clock, you may be sure it will rain that day, unless it thunders. The convolvulus and the pimpernel fold up their leaves on the approach of rain. Indeed the pimpernel is always called "the poor man's weather-glass." The different species of trefoil also contract their leaves at the approach of a storm : hence these plants have been termed "the husbandman's barometer." One species of wood sorrel doubles its leaves before storms and tempests, but in a serene sky expands and unfolds them.

*"If red the sun begins his race
Expect the rain will fall apace."*

*"The evening red, the morning gray,
Are certain signs of a fair day."*

*"If woolly fleeces spread the heavenly way,
No rain, be sure, disturbs the summer's day."*

*"In the waning of the moon
A cloudy morn—fair afternoon."*

*"When clouds appear like rocks and towers
The earth's refreshed by frequent showers."*

SEPTEMBER SIXTEENTH.—Did you know how many birds are mentioned in the Bible? I am noting down some I find, though I will not vouch for a complete list.

Sparrow.	Dove.
Turtle-dove.	Pelican.
Cuckoo.	Eagle.
Ostrich.	Lapwing.
Crow.	Hen.
Peacock.	Quail.
Swallow.	Swift.
Kite.	Heron.
Partridge.	Owl.
Swan.	Vulture.
Crane.	Pigeon.
Osprey.	Bittern.
Night-hawk (Night-jar).	Great Owl (Screech
Glebe (probably the	Owl).
Buzzard).	Raven.
Cormorant.	Hawk.
Stork.	Cock.

I never knew, until I came to look, that a cuckoo was mentioned.

Bats of course are mentioned, and grasshoppers, and every sort of insect. Flowers I will give on another page.

SEPTEMBER SEVENTEENTH.—I have spent a morning with Tusser. He wrote in 1573. Under the head of September I find the following :—

*“Set privie and prim,
Set boxe like him.
Set giloflowers all
That grows on the wall.*

*Set herbes some more
For winter store.
Sowe seedes for pot,
For flowers sowe not.”*

So evidently we must begin our box edgings and privet hedges, see to our wall flowers being in place, and make cuttings of all herbes. And we are *not* to sow our flower seeds out-of-doors. Then to the farmer he gives this advice :—

*“No sooner a sowing, but out by and by,
With Mother or Boy that Alarum can cry,
And let them be armed with sling and with bowe,
To skare away piggen, the rooke and the crowe.”*

Another verse of his I found I like very much :—

*“As bird by appearing betokeneth the spring,
And leafe by her falling the contrarie thing :
So youth bids us labour, to get as we can,
For age is a burden to laboring man.”*

He tells us we ought to learn much more about flowers and herbs than we know already :—

*“The nature of Flowers dame Physick doth shew,
She teacheth them all to be known to a few.
To set or to sowe, or else sown to remove,
How that should be practised, learne if ye love.”*

SEPTEMBER EIGHTEENTH.—From my window I can see the titmice feeding on the seeds of the sunflower. No prettier sight can I give you than a tiny cole-tit clinging upside down to the honeycombed centre heavy with shining black seed. Parkinson writes a beautiful description of the sunflower :—

“The golden flower of Peru, or the Flower of the Sunne. This goodly and stately plant, wherewith every one is now adayes familiar, being of many sorts both higher and lower, riseth up at first like unto a Pompion with two leaves, and after two it riseth up into a great stalke, bearing the leaves on it severall distances on all sides thereof, one above another unto the very toppe, being sometimes, and in some places, seven, eight, or ten foote high, . . . at the toppe of the stalke standeth one great, large, and broad flower, bowing downe the head unto the Sunne, and breaking forth from a great head, made of scaly greene leaves, like unto a great single Marigold, having a border of manie long yellow leaves, set about a great round yellow thrumme as it were in the middle, which are very like unto short heads of flowers, under every one there is a seede, larger than any seede of the Thistles, yet somewhat like, and lesser, and rounder than any Gourde seede, set in so close and curious a manner, that when the seede is taken out, the head with the hollow places or cels thereof, seemeth very like unto a honey combe.”

SEPTEMBER NINETEENTH.—“And can we, when we see the force of the Heavens mov’d and whirl’d about with admirable Celerity, most constantly finishing its anniversary Vicissitudes, to the eminent welfare and Preservation of all things, doubt at all that these things are perform’d not only by Reason, but by a certain and excellent and divine Reason.”—CICERO.

*“No radiant pearl, which crested Fortune bears,
No gem, that twinkling hangs from Beauty’s ears,
Not the bright stars, which night’s blue arch adorn,
Nor rising suns that gild the vernal morn,
Shine with such lustre on the tear that flows
Down Virtue’s manly cheek for others’ woes.”*

—ERASMUS DARWIN.

“’Tis an infallible Truth, that the beauty of Flowers never fails to inspire us with Joy.”

There is only one more quotation I will add to-day, and this time from Ruskin. I like to jot down thoughts and ideas as I tread life’s garden, for then sometimes when I am weary I can turn a leaf and find what my mood was on a certain day and that changes a train of thought and brings back sunshine. “Wherever men are noble they love bright colour; and wherever they can live healthily, bright colour is given them in sky, sea, flowers, and living creatures.”

SEPTEMBER TWENTIETH.—I have been reading to-day some poems by John Skelton. He was a curate in the year 1507. One poem is called “The Boke of Philip Sparrow,” and tells of the death of a favourite Sparrow. The death of Cock Robin is evidently a modern reproduction. After Philip Sparrow’s death, all the other birds are summoned to the funeral. “Some to weep, and some to praze.” “The goldfinch, the wagtaile ; The jangling jaye to rayle, The flecked pie to chatter ; And robyn red breste, He shall be the preest, with helpe of the red sparrow And the chattering swallow, the larke with his long toe, The spinke and the martinet also, The shovelar with his broad becke, The mad coote, The felde fare and the snyte, The crowe and the kyte, The raven called rolfe, The part-ryche, the quayle, the plover with us to wayle, The wood-hacke that singeth churre, The nightingale and poppingaze, the mavis with her whistell, The cockowe, the culver, stockdove, with peewyt the lapwing. The bitter with his bumpe, The crane with his trumpe, Ducke, drake, swan of Menander, goose and gander, peacocke, owle, heron cormoraunte, the gagling gaunte, the churlish chounge, the rout, and the kough, bussard, mallard ; The divendop to sleep, the water hen to weep, puffin, tele, titmose, wood-cocke with the long nose, The threstill with her warblinge and endless other birds.” It is interesting to note the same birds to-day. It ends—

“*God sende my sparow’s soule good rest
For he was a prety cocke
And came of a gentill stocke
And wrapt in a maiden’s smocke
And cherished full daintely
Tyll cruel fate made him to dye
Alas be doleful desteny.*”

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-FIRST.—“September flourisheth with the Flower of the Sunne, the Mervaille of Peru or of the world, the purple Marigold, and blew Bell-flower, and the great double french Marigold.”—PARKINSON.

“*Among the flow'rs, which late i' th' year arrive,
Immortal Amaranthus will survive.
For at that time an unknown multitude
Of vulgar flowers will themselves extrude.
Conyza, Horminum, Hedysarum,
Angelica, small Henbane, Armeria, Clematis,
With trembling Coriander, Barberis,
Both the Abrotonums, Myrrhe, Centory,
Slender Melissa, Sium, Cicory,
Buphthalmum, Stœchas, Hyosciamus,
And spotted Calendule their flow'rs produce.
Mint, and Nigella too ; with these we see
The Summer thus and Autumn still agree
To fructifie, and thus the year goes round,
While ev'ry season is with flowers crown'd.*”

This is from Rapin, “English'd” by John Evelyn. I cannot myself make out all the flowers, but then I do not pretend to overmuch knowledge of flowers.

“*The self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid
Of the smoot shaven prop ; and, neatly tied,
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,
For interest's sake, the living to the dead.*”

—COWPER.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-SECOND. — Tell me not, Anthea, that thy time is spent in rough rude games such as are pleasing to schoolboys. I love to picture thee bending over a tapestry frame or painting a flower.

*“Softer tasks divide Florella’s hours;
To watch the buds just opening on the day;
With welcome shade to screen the languid flowers,
That sicken in the Summer’s parching ray.
Oft will she stop amidst her evening walk,
With tender hand each bruised plant to rear,
To bind the drooping lily’s broken stalk,
And nurse the blossoms of the infant year.”*

And thou? Wilt thou follow in Florella’s footsteps? I cannot picture her playing hockey or even riding a bicycle. Yet she appeareth happy as the day is long. I prithee listen again. I waft thee another message through the medium of poets.

*“Much I love
To see the fair one bind the straggling pink,
Cheer the sweet rose, the lupin, and the stock,
And lend a staff to the still gadding pea.
Ye fair, it well becomes you. Better thus
Cheat time away than at the crowded rout,
Rustling in silk, in a small room close pent,
And heated e’en to fushion; made to breathe
A rank contagious air, and fret at whist,
Or sit aside to sneer and whisper scandal.”*

I can hear thy merry laugh, for thou wouldst far rather rustle in silk, I trow, than worry thy sweet mind over “the gadding pea.” Ah! well, I love thee in any state.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-THIRD.—I have been gathering hazel-nuts and eating them the while, and all the time consoled myself with thinking of what I read in dear old Culpepper's *Herbal*. He died in 1654, so he must have known all about everything. He first says that hazel-nuts are good for a cold. Then he at once begins to argue, as all these old writers do, as if the whole world was waiting on his doorstep to contradict him. "And if this be true, as it is, then why should the vulgar so familiarly affirm, that eating nuts causeth shortness of breath? than which nothing is falser. For how can that which strengthens the lungs cause shortness of breath? I confess the opinion is far older than I am; I knew tradition was a friend to error before, but never that he was the father of slander; or are men's tongues so given to slandering one another, that they must slander nuts too to keep their tongues in use? The red skin that covers the kernel you may easily pull off. And so thus have I made an apology for nuts, which cannot speak for themselves."

Delightful! I can now eat nuts without a moment's uneasiness, before or after! In olden days nuts were strewn before brides, I know not why, and the ceremony of strewing nuts was the last act in a marriage feast. For myself I should prefer rose leaves. Nuts would be sorry things to tread on in white satin slippers!

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH.—“It is not to old age alone, that the garden offers its placid delights. Every stage of life, from the cradle to the grave, is attracted by its charms. The infant is ready to spring from its nurse’s arms, allured by the gay colours which flowers exhibit. They form the most innocent joy of childhood, and the cultivation of them is generally its first labour, whilst their presentation often explains the passion of youth. The happy belle loves to entwine them in her locks, and the fond parents delight to see their child mimic their beauties with the pencil.”—*Sylva Florifera*.

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

“Four Seasons fill the measure of the year ;
There are four seasons in the mind of man :
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span :
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring’s honey’d cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven ; quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close ; contented so to look
On mists of idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.”

—KEATS.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-FIFTH.—This is the day I plant my bulbs in moss for early winter bloom. Hyacinths I love the best. Single blush, and pure white. I fill all my blue china bowls and green pottery with fresh picked moss, and I half bury the bulbs therein. I pack the moss firmly, but I do not actually cover the bulbs. Then I put the basins in a dark room or airy cupboard, and leave them till the roots are grown. I keep the moss damp, but when watered the bowls ought to be tipped on one side so as to let the water drain off. When the bowls are full of roots I stand them in the sun, and soon the green leaves push their way up and the flowers appear. It is wise to buy the best bulbs, and to be very careful that the moss never gets dry or is over-wet. I grow scillas in this way, and tulips, narcissus, German iris, and crocuses; but hyacinths are the most satisfactory. People talk about drainage, and charcoal and oyster shell, but moss I find quite enough and far simpler. The earlier the bulbs are in the beds the better. "Bulbs must be planted with a dybbyl three inches deepe," says an old writer. The middle of October is a good time, if you can harden your heart and do away with flowers. I am planting my beds with forget-me-nots and pink tulips this year. Polyanthus and daffodils, wall-flowers and paper-white narcissus. And my tubs with mixed tulips—also a bed of mauve tulips, and white. I get my bulbs from Sydenham, Tenby Street, Birmingham, because they are so reliable.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-SIXTH.

OLD FLOWER NAMES.

I have found some more dear old names even sweeter than the last.

Carnation = Soppes-in-Wine, Julian, Jove's Flower,

July Flower, Gilly Flower, Granpere, Tuggies.

Meadowsweet = Quene of the Meadowes, Bride-wort.

Veronica = Fluellin.

Vervein = Holy herb, Juno's Tears.

Clematis = Lady's Bower, Traveller's Joy, Old Man's beard.

London Pride = None-so-pretty, Nancy Pretty, Speckled sweet William.

Touch-me-not = Impatiens, Noli me tangere, Quick-in-the-hand.

Selfe-heale = Hooke - heale, Sicklewort, Carpenter's Herb.

Stone-Crop = Pricket, Mouse-tail, Wall Pepper, Country Pepper, Jack of the Butterie.

Fennel Flower = Devil-in-a-Bush.

Ground Ivy = Ale-hoose, Gill-go-by-Ground, Cats-foot.

Colchicum = Son-before-the-father, Naked boys.

Larkspur = Larks heel, Larks toes, Larks claw.

Gorse = Furze, Gorse, Whin, Prickley Broome.

Fritilaria = Chequer'd Daffodil, Turkey-hen - floure, Ginnie-hen-floure, Lap Wing flower, Snake's Head.

Cyclamen = Sow Bread.

Sunflower = The Floure of the Sun, Marigold of Peru.

Dandelion = Deut de Lion.

Solomon's Seal = Ladder to Heaven, Jacob's Ladder.

Thrift = Our Lady's Cushion.

Another day I will write another list.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run ;
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

.
 Where are the songs of Spring ? Ah ! where are they ?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river salallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ;
 Hedge-crickets sing ; and now with treble soft
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft ;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies."

—KEATS.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-EIGHTH.—Ah me! there are signs of winter. All the swallows are collecting preparatory to their annual journey. How it saddens my heart, for before we meet again winter's cold will sweep over the land. I see them sitting in rows on the telegraph wires. They are mostly young birds, and I see that they rest while their busy parents dash over the meadows and commons, flying up to the wires ever and anon with a mouthful of food for their offspring. The young are, however, mostly able to look after themselves by now. On fine days swallows still sing on the wing, but the wood-pigeon is almost silent, and friend robin redbreast only sings a very little. By-and-bye, he promises, he will sing to cheer our winter. The titmice are calling from tree to tree, doubtless to remind us to order in hemp-seed in plenty of time. On the common, where the low autumnal gorse is golden, blending with the heather which dying turns tawny brown, meadow-pipits and stone-chats may be heard uttering a cry or two, while overhead martins pass with "crick crick." By the brook side we were surprised at the loud noise made by a pair of yellow wagtails which we startled from the bank. Apple-trees are red and gold with fruit, and filberts are waiting to be gathered, unless indeed we wish the nuthatches to do the work for us. We must have patience; winter will come and go, and summer be with us again. Patience grows as years pass.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-NINTH.

MICHAELMAS DAY.—ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

*“September, when by custom (right divine)
Geese are ordain’d to bleed at Michael’s shrine.”*

—CHURCHILL.

*“And when the tenautes come
To paie their quarter’s rent,
They bring some fowle at Midsummer,
A dish of fish at Lent,
At Christmasse a capon,
At Michaelmasse a goose,
And some-what else at New-yere’s tide,
For feare their lease flie loose.”*

—GASCOIGNE.

There is a very old saying, “If you eat a goose on Michaelmas Day, you will never want money all the year round.”

“So many dayes old the moon is on Michaelmass-day, so many floods after.”—1661.

“A goose is the emblem of meere modestie.”

*“The Michaelmas Daisy, amonge dead Weeds,
Blooms for St. Michael’s valorous deeds.”*

“TO SALT A GOOSE.

“Take a fat Goose and bone him, but leave the brest-bone, wipe him with a clean cloath, then salt him one fortnight, then hang him up for one fortnight or three weeks, then boyl him in running water very tender, and serve him with Bay leaves.”—*The Compleat Cook*, 1656.

SEPTEMBER THIRTIETH. — Here is Drayton's description of Elysium :—

*“ In groves that evermore are green,
No falling leaf is there,
But Pilomel (of birds the queen)
In music spends the year.*

*.
The merl upon her myrtle perch
There to the mavis sings,
Who from the top of some curl'd birch
Those notes redoubled rings.*

*.
There daisies damask every place,
Nor once their beauties lose,
That when proud Phæbus hides her face
Themselves they scorn to close.*

*.
The pansy and the violet here,
As seeming to descend
Both from one root, a very pair,
For sweetness do contend.*

*And pointing to a pink to tell
Which bears it, it is loth
To judge it ; but replies, for smell
That it excels them both.*

*The winter here a summer is,
No waste is made by time,
Nor doth the autumn ever miss
The blossoms of the prime.”*

OCTOBER FIRST.—“For flowers we have single *Anemonies*, *Tube-roses*, *Lawrel*, *Time Flowers*, *Velvet Flowers*, *Jasmins*, *Lawrel-Rose*, *Ciclamens*.”—*The Compleat Gard’ner*, 1649.

“In *October*, come *Services* ; *Medlars* ; *Bullises* ; *Roses* Cut or Removed to come late ; *Holly-okes* ; and such like.”—BACON.

“*Now soften’d suns a mellow lustre shed,
The laden orchards glow with tempting red ;
On hazel boughs the clusters hang embrown’d
And with the sportman’s war the new shorn fields resound.*”

“There are accompaniments in an autumnal woodland walk that call for our notice and admiration. The peculiar feeling in the air, a silence in which we hear everything, a beauty that will be observed. . . . Rambling with unfettered grace, the tendrils of the briony festoons with its brilliant berries, green, golden, red, the slender sprigs of the hazel, or the thorn ; the squirrel, agile with life and timidity, gambolling round the root of an ancient beech, its base overgrown with the dewberry, blue with unsullied fruit, impeded in his frolic sports, half angry, darts up the silvery hole again, to peep and wonder at the strange intruder on his haunts. The jay springs up screaming, tells of danger to her brood, the noisy tribe repeat the call, are hushed, and leave us ; the loud laugh of the woodpecker, joyous and vacant ; the hammering of the nuthatch, the humble bee torpid on the disc of the purple thistle, just lifts a limb to pray forbearance of injury. The sere and yellow leaf.”—*Journal of a Naturalist*, 1830.



OCTOBER

OCTOBER SECOND.—In a little old French book, too charming for words, I find the following :—

“ATTRIBUTS DE CHAQUE HEURE DU JOUR CHEZ
LES ANCIENS.

- “ La première heure, un bouquet de rose épanouies.
 La deuxième, un bouquet d'héliotrope.
 La troisième, un bouquet de roses blanches.
 La quatrième, un bouquet d'hyacintha.
 La cinquième, quelques citrons.
 La sixième, un bouquet de lotus.
 La septième, un bouquet de lupins.
 La huitième, plusieurs oranges.
 La neuvième, des feuilles d'olivier.
 La dixième, des feuilles de peuplier.
 La onzième, un bouquet de soucis.
 La douzième, un bouquet de pensées et de violettes.”

“ Les anciens représentaient les *quatre saisons* par les couleurs ci-après.”

- | | | |
|--------|-----------|---------------|
| “ Vert | | La printemps. |
| Rouge | | L'été. |
| Bleu | | L'automne. |
| Noir | | L'hiver.” |

OCTOBER THIRD.

*“ Summer is gone on Swallow’s wings,
 And Earth has buried all her flowers ;
 No more the lark, the linnet, sings,
 But Silence sits in faded bowers.
 There is a shadow on the plain
 Of Winter ere he comes again,—
 There is in woods a solemn sound
 Of hollow warnings whispered round,
 As echo in her deep recess
 For once had turned a prophetess.
 Shuddering Autumn stops to list,
 And breathes his fear in sudden sighs,
 With clouded face and hazel eyes
 That quench themselves, and hide in mist.”*

So writes Tom Hood, and further in the poem my thoughts are lost in his, for I feel too if Summer is really gone we can conjure the flowers anew in our memories, and we are never without sunshine after all.

*“ But still for Summer dost they grieve ?
 Then read our Poets—they shall weane
 A garden of green fancies still,
 Where thy wish may rove at will.
 They have kept for after treats
 The essences of summer sweets,
 And echoes of its songs that wind
 In endless music through the mind :
 They have stamped in visible traces
 The ‘ Thoughts that breathe,’ in words that shine—
 The flights of soul in shining places—
 To greet and company with thine.”*
 —“The Departure of Summer.”

OCTOBER FOURTH. — Here is a verse which will perhaps fit your mood, but I trust that you would soon rise above it.

*“ I am weary ! I am weary of the green earth and the sun,
They are joyful things to look upon when life is but begun !
In the young days when a flower’s breath or wild bird’s thrilling tone,
Or the sweet, fresh air of heaven were happiness alone !*

*But the green earth in its beauty hath a mournful look to me,
And a dream of sadness dwells within the voice of stream and tree.
The kindly looks are vanished that made home Paradise,
The glorious sunshine is not worth the light of loving eyes.”*

—HELEN, LADY DUFFERIN.

*“ When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee ;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And moon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.”*

—SHELLEY.

*“ The day star riseth from afar,
And Thou art near,
Hope springs again, and courage lives ;
I will not fear.”*

OCTOBER FIFTH.—If you are planting trees now I beg of you to read the following piece of advice that I found in a very old book. It is valuable advice and given with rare thought.

“One of the most important things in planting is to attend particularly to the shades of green, especially where the view from the house or lawn catches the trees. Flowers, which Pliny calls the joys of the trees, continue but for a short period, in comparison to the duration of foliage; therefore, the picture should be formed by judiciously contrasting the greens. Even the effect of perspective may be considerably increased by the proper arrangement of hues. Trees whose leaves are of a grey or bluish tint, when seen over or between shrubs of a yellow or bright green, seem thrown into the distance. Trees with small and tremulous leaves should wave over or before those of broad or fixed foliage. The light and elegant acacia has a most beautiful effect when its branches float over the firm and dark holly or bay-tree. In all situations, Nature may be assisted, but should never be deformed by clipping; for ingenuity ought to be employed to disguise art, not to expose it.”—*Sylva Florifera*.

I think nothing is prettier than a group of copper-beech, pink may, and laburnum, “Golden Rain” as it is called in Germany.

OCTOBER SIXTH.—Delia, fetch thy guitar and set these lines to music. They have a ring of contentment in them, which I love.

*“ Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird’s throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither :
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.*

*Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i’ the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas’d with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither :
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.”*

—SHAKESPEARE.

*“ How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky,
The gorgeous fame of summer which is fled !
Hues of all flowers that in their ashes lie,
Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,
Tulip and hyacinth, and sweet Rose red.”*

OCTOBER SEVENTH.—“If in the fall of the leaf in October, many leaves wither on the boughs and hang there, it betokens a frosty winter and much snow.”

“Chaff, leaves, thistle-down, and such light things whisking about and turning round, forshews tempestuous winds.”—*Shepherd's Kalendar*.

“Of *Plants*, some are *Greene* all *Winter* ; others cast their *Leaves*. There are *Greene* all *Winter* ; *Holly*, *Ivy*, *Boxe*, *Firre*, *Eugh*, *Cypresse*, *Juniper Bayes*, *Rose-Mary*, &c. The *Cause* of the *Holding Greene*, is the *Close* and *Compact Substance* of their *Leaves*, and the *Pedicles* of them. And the *Cause* of that againe, is either the *Tough* and *Viscous Juyce* of the *Plant* ; or the *Strength* and *Heat* thereof. Of the first Sort is *Holly* ; which is of so *Viscous* a *Juyce*, as they make *Bird-lime* of the *Barke* of it. The *Stalke* of *Ivy* is *Tough*, and not *Fragile*, as wee see in other small *Twigs* dry. *Firre* yeeldeth *Pitch*, *Box* is a fast and heavie *Wood*, as we see it in *Boules*. *Eugh* is a *Strong* and *Tough Wood*, as we see it in *Bowes*. Of the second Sort is *Juniper*, which is a *Wood* *Odorate*, and maketh a hot *Fire*. *Bayes* is likewise a *Hot* and *Aromaticall Wood* ; and so is *Rose-Mary* for a *Shrub*. As for the *Leaves*, their *Densitie* appeareth, in that, either they are *Smooth* and *Shining*, as in *Bayes*, *Holly*, *Ivy*, *Box*, &c.; or in that they are *Hard* and *Spirie*, as in the rest.”—BACON, *Sylva Sylvarum*.

I find in Bacon this delightful expression. Speaking of a “Chappell,” he says it is “some Bird-bolt Shot, or more, from the river.”

OCTOBER EIGHTH.—I have been watching at night for gleams of light from my nasturtians, which are still in flower, but have not as yet seen even a spark. In Darwin's book I read that "one evening M. Haggren perceived a faint flash of light repeatedly dart from a Marigold ; and, to be assured that it was no deception of the eye, he placed a man near him, with orders to make a signal at the moment when he observed the light. They both saw it constantly at the same moment. The light was most brilliant on Marigolds of an orange or flame colour ; but scarcely visible on pale ones.

"This phenomenon was remarked in the months of July and August, at sunset, and for half an hour later, when the atmosphere was clear ; but after a rainy day, or when the air was heavy with vapour, nothing of it was seen.

"The following flowers emitted flashes, more or less vivid, in order :—

"The Marigold
Garden Nasturtian,
Orange Lily,
African Marigold.

"Sometimes it is also observed on Sunflowers. But bright yellow, or flame colour, seemed in general necessary for the production of this light ; for it was never seen on the flowers of any other colour. . . .

"From the rapidity of the flash, and other circumstances, it might be conjectured that there is something of electricity in this phænomenon."

OCTOBER NINTH.—I must copy to-day Bishop Heber's lines on the Seasons. There is much to learn in such writing, and though some folks presume to pass him by for modern writing, they lose much by such an act.

*“When Spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil ;
When Summer's balmy showers refresh the mowder's toil ;
When Winter binds in frosty chains the fallow and the flood ;—
In God the earth rejoiceth still, and owns his Maker good.*

*The birds that wake the morning, and those that love the shade ;
The winds that sweep the mountain or lull the drowsy glade ;
The sun that from his amber bowver rejoiceth on his way,
The moon and stars, their Master's name in silent pomp display.*

*Shall man, the lord of Nature, expectant of the sky,
Shall man, alone unthankful, his little praise deny ?
No, let the year forsake his course, the seasons cease to be,
Thee, Master, must we always love, and, Saviour, honour Thee.*

*The flowers of Spring may wither, the hope of Summer fade,
The Autumn droop in Winter, the birds forsake the shade ;
The winds be lull'd—the sun and moon forget their old decree,
But we in Nature's latest hour, O Lord ! will cling to Thee.”*

OCTOBER TENTH.—It is a Polish superstition that each month has a particular gem attached to it, which governs it, and is supposed to influence the destiny of persons born in that month; it is therefore customary among friends, and lovers particularly, to present each other with some trinket containing their tutelary gem.

JANUARY.

Jacinth or *Garnet* denotes constancy and fidelity in every enjoyment.

FEBRUARY.

Amethyst ensures peace of mind.

MARCH.

Bloodstone denotes courage and secrecy in dangerous enterprises.

APRIL.

Sapphire or *Diamond* denotes repentance and innocence.

MAY.

Emerald, successive love.

JUNE.

Agate ensures long life and health.

JULY.

Ruby or *Cornelian*, cure for all evils.

AUGUST.

Sardonix ensures conjugal felicity.

SEPTEMBER.

Chrysolite preserves from or cures folly.

OCTOBER.

Aquamarine or *Opal* denotes misfortune and hope.

NOVEMBER.

Topaz ensures friendship.

DECEMBER.

Turquoise or *Malachite* denotes the most brilliant success and happiness in every circumstance of life.

OCTOBER ELEVENTH.—The great love of nature in after life.

“ I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains ; and of all that we behold
From the green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create,
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.”

—WORDSWORTH.

OCTOBER TWELFTH.—In spring-time,

*“ I love to see the little goldfinch pluck
The groundsel’s feather’d seed, and twit and twit ;
And then in bower of apple-blossoms perch’d,
Trim his gay suit, and pay us with a song.”*

It seems unfortunately but too true that Goldfinches are rapidly becoming quite uncommon in this country ; for in districts where, some thirty years ago, flocks of these pretty birds might have been seen feeding on the ripe seeds of the charlock, or chasing, on glittering golden wing, the wind-driven thistle-down, only a family or two is now to be met with. A bird-catcher told me that in earlier years he had on one occasion caught eleven dozen of fine goldfinches in his net at one pull of the string ; now, however, in the same district, with the help of bird-lime, he has to be content with a few dozen during the whole season, nets in most places having been discarded.

Unequalled for grace and beauty by any other of our singing birds, and surpassed in song by few, it is not to be wondered at if bird-catchers have made great havoc among goldfinches, nor are they alone to blame for their present scarcity. The teasle, at one time regularly cultivated, is now seldom seen even in the wildest parts, and on the seed of the teasle the goldfinch used to feed largely. The requirements of modern farming insist on the plough being driven close up to the hedge, fields no longer go fallow, and thistles and other seed-bearing plants disappear. So, with the disappearance of his natural food, the Thistle-finch too is lost to us.

OCTOBER THIRTEENTH.—I have been thinking so much of the scent of Flowers to-day. Perhaps because a bunch of scented grass comes in a letter from America.

*“Soft roll your incense, herbs and flowers,
In mingled clouds to Him whose sun exalts,
Whose breath perfumes you and whose pencil paints.”*

—THOMSON.

*“By the breath of flowers
Thou callest us . . .*

Receive

*Thanks, blessings, love, for these, thy lavish boons,
And, most of all, their heavenward influences,
O Thou that gavest us flowers ! ”*

—MRS. HEMANS.

“Scents are the souls of flowers : they can be perceived even in the land of shadows.”—Joubert.

“Flowers are not only intended to beautify the Earth with their shining Colours, but the greatest part of them, in order to render the Entertainment more exquisite, diffuse a Fragrance that perfumes all the Air around us ; and it should seem as if they were solicitous to reserve their Odours for the Evening and Morn, when walking is most agreeable, and their Sweets are very faint, during the Heat of the Day, when we visit them the least. Have the Flowers enter’d into any Mutual Agreement to serve us with so much Complaisance ? . . . The Evaporation of these fine Spirits which are the Essence and Aromatic Parts of the Flowers forms an atmosphere around them which is dissipated or condensed, as the Action of the Air or Sun is more or less intense.”—*Nature Display’d*, 1736.

OCTOBER FOURTEENTH.—ST. CALIXTUS.

“If St. Calixtus’s day be dry and windy, the winter will be wet : but if it be rainy and still, the harvest will be good.”

*“Farewell ! farewell ! bright children of the sun,
Whose beauty rose around our paths where’er
We wander’d forth since vernal days begun,
The glory and the garland of the year.
Ye came, the children of the spring’s bright promise ;
Ye crowned the summer in her path of light,
And now, when autumn’s wealth is passing from us,
We gaze upon your parting bloom, as bright
And dearer far than summer’s richest hue—
Sweet flowers, adieu !*

—FRANCES BROWN.

*“O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colours after rain,
Shine sweetly : thrice my love hath smiled on me.”*

—TENNYSON.

How we miss the flowers ! Yet the sunshine and the rain are with us still, and the woods are ablaze with autumn glory. One or two late roses, which bloom for the sake of the love I bear them, are in a glass by my side, and I am busy planting bulbs, striving the while to look forward with hope, instead of backward with regret. Courage, dear heart, even when leaves fall, buds form, and the change of season will make the promise of spring more perfect. We are not bidden do more than trust.

OCTOBER FIFTEENTH.—I have heard a thrush singing a good deal in the daytime during this week. The robin and hedge-sparrow also sing to us, and bid us not despair though the leaves fall apace and some trees are quite bare. The long-tailed tits fly about in a family party, and are most delightful to watch. They flit from twig to twig, and hang in all sorts of attitudes searching for insects. Then they flutter at the end of a branch and play together like children. They are not at all shy, and let me watch them for a long time. There are many hen black-birds about, who seem to spend their time quarrelling with one another. Michaelmas daisies are in bloom, and one is so thankful to them for being so late, not to have been tempted out by summer glory, but to have waited to cheer us when leaves fall. There is a tiny cyclamen on the rockery, too, in flower, a little pink one, which is very dear to me. The Pampas grass is in full flower, great white waving feathers shining against the bright crimson mespilus trees. I never saw anything more lovely.

“My lord, doe you see this change i’ the moone? Sharpe hornes doe threaten windy weather.”—1631.

“Il fait beau temps quand les cornes de la lune sont en haut, mauvais temps lorsqu’elles sont en bas.”

OCTOBER SIXTEENTH.

*“The Beds we in October should disclose,
And on large floors the Bulbous roots expose
To th’ air, that the Sun’s rays may then attract
That moisture which in Summer they contract
By lying under ground ; thus purg’d and clean,
After some time they may be set agen.
And better to resist the Winter’s cold,
They must be deeply buried in the mould.”*

—RAPIN.

It serves to brighten and lighten the thought of the coming winter if we may already plant our Spring garden. Some think the bulbs ought to be in in September, but I verily believe October is time enough. Take my advice and get the very best bulbs ; cheap ones never answer, and only fill the future with disappointment. Nothing is so pretty as beds of forget-me-not with tulips coming up between. I think pink tulips look the prettiest, with the sky blue of “our lady’s eyes.” Then beds of dark copper and bright gold wall-flower, and raised beds or tubs of different coloured pansies. Daffodils with an edging of blue scillas, and under every tree, in the grass, plant the big purple crocus. I do not think I care very much for hyacinths out-of-doors.

*“These, and a thousand others will contend
T’enrich your garden ; odours too ascend
Spreading themselves through the serener air,
Where gentle breezes strive to bless the air.”*

—RAPIN.

OCTOBER SEVENTEENTH.—In *Flowers and Gardens*, a book I love, Forbes Watson tells us we ought to learn more about flowers than we do, “the time of its appearance and flowering, what it does with itself in the winter, whether dropping its leaves . . . or disappearing beneath the ground like a Snowdrop or Hyacinth, or facing the cold with a tuft of leaves lying close upon the earth like a Foxglove. What sort of locality does it love—field, marsh, rock? How does it treat other plants when it encounters them? Does it twine round them like a *Convolvulus*, creep over them like many trailing plants, or bear itself erect like a *Buttercup*? How does it wither? shabbily and untidy like the *Pansy*, or in the neat, decorous mode of the *Gentianella*? These and all other facts which we can learn about a plant have a value in an imaginative point of view; they tell us something about it, and so enable us to understand it, to read its true meaning and character.”

“Fathers, instil into your children the garden-mania. They will grow up the better for it. Let other arts be only studied to heighten the beauty of the one I advocate. Engaged in planning how to shade a glen, or in contriving how to divert the course of a stream, one is too busy ever to become a dangerous citizen, an intriguing general, or a caballing courtier . . . his head would be full of his *Judæa* trees, or his flower borders, or with the ordering of his grove of plane trees.”—PRINCE DE LIGNE.

OCTOBER EIGHTEENTH.—ST. LUKE'S DAY.

*“Aske Medicus counsell, ere medicine ye make,
And honour that man, for necessities sake.
Though thousands hate physick, because of the cost,
Yet thousands it helpeth, that else should be lost.”*
—TUSSER.

We find in *Adam in Eden*, W. Cole's wonderful Herball (1657), this passage: “Now let me tell the ingenious Reader, and by him others, that if those of these times would but be, by a joynt Concurrence, as industrious to search into the secrets of the nature of Herbs, as some of the former times, and make tryall of them as they did, and should no doubt find the force of Simples many times no lesse Effectuall, then that of Compounds, to which this present age is too much addicted.

“Thus have I broken the Nut of Herbarisme, do thou take out the Kernel and eate it and much good may it do thee.” I never can read the last paragraph without smiling. I think W. Cole must have had a great sense of humour! I bid you seek the man

*“Where Vertue shines, and deeply seemes to rest,
Where ayde appeares, to helpe the health of man,
Where perfect prooffe assignes us what is best,
Where counsell craves, eache willing mind to skan,
Where learning lyes to help us nowe and then :”*
—LYTE, 1578.

Culpepper, the old Herbalist who died in 1654, writing of Wild Clary, says, “It is most blasphemously called Christ's Eye, because it cures diseases of the eye. I could wish,” he goes on, “from my Soule Blasphemy, Ignorance, and Tyranny were ceased among physicians that they may be happy and I joyful.”

OCTOBER NINETEENTH.

*"A spirit haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :
To himself he talks ;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks ;
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks of mouldering flowers :
Heavily hangs the broad sun-flower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
Heavily hangs the holly hock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily."*

—TENNYSON.

*"Live thy life
Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
Living gold ;*

*Summer-rich
Thew ; and then
Autumn changed,
Soberer-hued
Gold again.*

*All his leaves
Fall'n at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough,
Naked strength."*

—TENNYSON.

OCTOBER TWENTIETH.

"In the last Products of the turning Year,
Immortal Amaranthuses appear,
Proud of their purple Tufts and flow'ring Hair : }
The vulgar Tribe immod'rately abound,
Profusely grow, and riot o'er the Ground ;
Wild-clary, and red Hatchet-vetches pour
Their Blossoms forth with Flea-bane, Virgins-Bow'r,
Mints, Cassidony, Henbane, Fennel flow'r,
Succ'ry, Sweet Williams, Wodel, Marsh-Mallows sing,
And gentle Coriander's trembling string.
Barberrys, both Southern-woods, and Myrrh will rise,
Balm, Ox-eye, Sium, and strong Centauries,
Nor the Calendulâs will hide their Face,
Painting the Meadows with a various Grace :
Each Season thus adorns the annual Round
With its own Pomp, and flow'ry graces crown'd."

—RAPIN.

"I have not only"—in this Kalendar of mine—"set the names of Plants and their Vertues but their proprieties also, their Affects and Effects, their Increase and Decrease, their Flourishing and Fading ; their distinct Varieties and several Qualities, so that I may resolve the Reader thus much, that though no Art be able to expresse Nature in her likeness, yet if any author can with his Pen counterfeit Similitude for Life, shape and shaddowes for substance, he doth to the utmost of his power expresse his Duty."—*Adam in Eden, or Nature's Paradise*, W. Cole, 1657.

OCTOBER TWENTY-FIRST.—I never knew autumn could be so perfectly beautiful till to-day. We walked home through the wood from the Abbey about sunset. There was a soft pink glow over all, but as we could not see the sun the glow was a mystery. Through the wood a blue mist rose from the damp leaves and met the glow. At our feet, and reaching away to the dark unknown corners of the wood were rolling billows of brown bracken, with purple shadows sweeping across the fern. Overhead an enchanting golden tracery of leaves, so transparent and light. I never saw anything so perfect. As the leaves were already falling the boughs hung in soft and dainty festoons, outlined here and there with dark stems. Now and again a pale yellow tree shone between two dark hollies, and the burnished beeches touched by the sunset glow almost dazzled the eye with their background of blue firs. I wish I could conjure the vision for you. The mystery of the wood with golden canopy overhead. Now and then a dead tree creaked and we stood a moment to wonder if it was some strange bird. In the silence a pheasant rising suddenly from the fern at our feet with its rapid cry, "Cuck-cuck, Cuck-cuck-cuck-cuck," startled us not a little. Then overhead a mighty black army of rooks cawed loudly and circled over the trees, having just returned from their day's outing. They were invisible to us, for the golden screen hid them from view; but the noise was incessant, sometimes angry, sometimes soothing as they quarrelled for the best tree, or settled to rest. In the distance a dog barked, and a boy called from the top of a ladder leaning against a rick in the stack-yard. As we neared home the glow faded and the mist rose.

OCTOBER TWENTY-SECOND.

OCTOBER.

*“Ay, thou art welcome, heaven’s delicious breath,
When woods begin to wear the crimson leaf,
And suns grow meek, and the meek suns grow brief,
And the year smiles as it draws near its death.
Wind of the sunny South ! oh still delay
In the gay woods and in the golden air,
Like to a good old age released from care,
Journeying, in long serenity, away.
In such a bright, late quiet, would that I
Might wear out life like thee, ’mid bowers and brooks,
And, dearer yet, the sunshine of kind looks,
And music of kind voices ever nigh ;
And, when the last sand twinkled in the glass,
Pass silently from men, as thou dost pass.”*

—BRYANT.

“The low flight of rooks indicates rain. If they feed busily, and hurry over the ground in one direction, and in a compact body, a storm will soon follow. When they sit in rows on dykes and palings, wind is looked for ; when going home to roost, if they fly high, the next day will be fair, and *vice versâ*. In autumn and winter, if after feeding in the morning they return to the rookery and hang about it, rain is expected.”

OCTOBER TWENTY-THIRD.

*“Of Nature’s laws his carols first began,
Why the grave owl can never face the sun,
For owls, as swains observe, detest the light,
And only sing and seek their prey by night.
How turnips hide their swelling heads below,
And how the closing colworts upwards grow ;
How Will-a-Wisp misleads night-faring clowns,
O’er hills, and sinking bogs, and pathless downs.
Of stars he told that shoot with shining trail,
And of the glow-worm’s light that gilds his tail,
He sung where wood-cocks in the summer feed,
And in what climates they renew their breed ;
Some think to northern coasts their flight they tend,
Or to the moon in midnight hours ascend.
Where swallows in the winter season keep,
And how the drowsy bat and dormouse sleep.”*

—GAY.

Our Swain had possibly read Tusser, from whence he might have collected these philosophical observations. Dr. Foster in his *Calendar* has collected the following facts from very old sources :—

“Tezils or Fullers Thistle, being gathered and hanged up in the house where the air may come freely to it, before the alteration of cold and windy weather, will grow smoother, and against rain will close up his prickles.”

“Heliotropes and Marygolds do not only presage stormy weather, by closing up and contracting together their leaves, but turn towards the Sun’s rays all the day, and in the evening shut up shop.”

“The leaves of trees and plants in general will shake and tremble against a tempest more than ordinary.”

“Leaves in the winds, or down floating upon the water, are signs of tempests.”

OCTOBER TWENTY-FOURTH.—I have never had any patience with the language of flowers! Even in the merry merry days when I was young, in all my foolishness, I failed to find pleasure in flower symbols. Yet these lines which I have just found please me.

*“ In Eastern lands they talk in flowers,
And they tell in a garland their loves and cares ;
Each blossom that blooms in their garden bowers
On its leaves a mystic language bears.*

*The rose is a sign of joy and love,
Young, blushing love in its earliest dawn ;
And the mildness that suits the gentle dove
From the myrtle's snowy flower is drawn.*

*Innocence shines in the lily's bell
Pure as the heart in its native heaven ;
Fame's bright star and glory's swell
In the glossy leaf of the bay is given.*

*The silent, soft, and humble heart
In the violet's hidden sweetness breathes ;
And the tender soul that cannot part
A twine of evergreen fondly wreathes.*

*The cypress, that daily shades the grave,
Is sorrow that mourns her bitter lot ;
And faith, that a thousand ills can brave,
Speaks in thy blue leaves, forget-me-not.*

*Then gather a wreath from the garden flowers,
And tell the wish of thy heart in flowers.”*

—PERCIVAL.

OCTOBER TWENTY-FIFTH.—I am much entertained by passages in *The Practise of Gardening*, written originally in the end of the seventeenth century. Certainly the writer leaves nought to the imagination! Speaking on the art of Digging, he says: "There are four several Ways of carrying off Earth, in Carts drawn by Horses, in Wheelbarrows drove by Men, in Dorsers or Hampers carried by Horses or Asses, and in Baskets upon Men's Backs. The best of the four is, without Doubt, that which goes fastest, and costs least; but the Difficulty lies in knowing well which that is. . . . If Men that drive the Wheelbarrow, or carry the Basket, would make Conscience to do a good Day's work, I should prefer them: But as these People are generally intolerably lazy, and have no Concern but to spin out the Day, I esteem the way of carrying upon Asses Backs to be the best of all. As an Ass has two Panniers he carries twice as much at a Time, so that one turn of the Ass is as good as two of the Basket or Wheelbarrow, and costs very little more, though there be a woman or a little boy to lead them. There is, besides, a good Reason for esteeming these, for that the Asses loiter but little, they are used to a certain Pace, which, tho' slow, forwards the Work however, because 'tis constant from morning till night, without any other interruption, than that of a baiting time."

I have never heard the ass so highly esteemed and extolled before! and find myself beginning to wonder why we do not all have a donkey instead of a wheelbarrow in our gardens. I shall at once look out for one who will never loiter!

OCTOBER TWENTY-SIXTH.

*"I saw old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn ;
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.*

*The squirrel gloats on his accomplished board,
The ants have brimmed their garner with ripe grain,
And honey bees have stored
The sweets of Summer in their luscious cells ;
The swallows all have winged across the main ;
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,
And sighs her tearful spells,
Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.
Alone, alone,
Upon a mossy stone,
She sits and reckons up the dead and gone
With the last leaves for a love-rosary,
Whilst all the withered world looks drearily,
Like a dim picture of the drowned past
In the bushed mind's mysterious far away,
Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last
Into the distance, grey upon the grey."*

—TOM HOOD.

"If in the fall of the leaf in October, many leaves wither on the boughs and hang there, it betokens a frosty winter and much snow."

OCTOBER TWENTY-SEVENTH.—Let me write of pretty flower borders for next year, so that you may be ready. I am sure we do not sow our seeds early enough, and are often “too late” all along the line. One of my prettiest beds has been yellow daisies behind (the kind that flowers early), then tall heliotropes and in front a row of pink ivy geraniums. Another great bed of lavender was lovely when in flower, with orange tiger-lilies growing up between. I saw a long border of small rhododendrons simply carpeted with portulacas in flower. It was like a brilliant new Indian carpet. The flowers shone like jewels in the sun. If you can grow great groups of larkspurs with a hedge of crimson rambler rose for background you will be filled with joy. We must *group* and we must plant for effect. A garden picture is not perfect without a *feature* at every turn. A bright border can be made with lobelias and Tom Thumb nasturtians round a group of white daisies ; it is *splendid* if grown well. My auratum lilies rearing their heads six feet high out of a bed of tall montbresias has been a sight for sore eyes. We do not grow enough agapanthus in tubs. I must see to that another summer ; blue is such a help. Pink hollyhocks, pink mallows in a mist of gypsophila is a group worthy of mention. Then yellows of all shades grouped together with Marvel of Peru in front. White Tobacco with rose penstemons, make a pretty combination. Everyone has their own ideas, and individuality adds so much to the charm of a garden. We should try always to be original.

OCTOBER TWENTY-EIGHTH.—I have been reading Drayton's poems to-day. Drayton was born in 1563, so his poems are of ancient date. His account of a fairy's wedding is so pretty. The wedding gown was to be—

*"Of pansy, pink, and primrose leaves,
Most curiously laid on in threaves :
And all embroidery to supply,
Powder'd with flowers of rosemary :
A trail about the skirt shall run,
The silk-worm's finest, newly spun ;"*

Then for a canopy over her head—

*"Moon's from the peacock's tail we'd shred,
With feathers from the pheasant's head :
Mix'd with the plume of (so high price)
The precious bird of paradise."*

For the music—

*"The nightingale of birds most choice
To do her best shall strain her voice ;
And to this bird to make a set,
The mavis, merl, and robinet.
The lark, the linnet, and the thrush,
That make a Choir of every bush.
But for still music, we will keep
The wren, and titmouse."*

And then again—

*"Of leaves of roses white and red,
Shall be the covering of her bed :
The curtains, vallens, tester, all,
Shall be the flower imperial :
And for the fringe, it all along
With azure harebells shall be hung :
Of lilies shall the pillows be,
With down stuff of the butterfly.
. . . Then serve we up the straws rich berry,
The respas, and Elysium cherry."*

This is dainty writing indeed, and a bridal we would fain attend.

OCTOBER TWENTY-NINTH.—The following poem carries a lesson with it which we should do well to take to heart.

THE STARLINGS.

*“Early in spring-time, on raw and windy mornings,
Beneath the freezing house-eaves I heard the starlings sing—
‘Ah dreary March month, is this then a time for building wearily?
Sad, sad, to think that the year is but begun.’*

*Late in the autumn, on still and cloudless evenings,
Among the golden reed-beds I heard the starlings sing—
‘Ah that sweet March month, when we and our mates were
courting merrily;
Sad, sad, to think that the year is all but done.’”*

—KINGSLEY.

*“While with succeeding flow’rs the year is crown’d,
Where painted leaves enamel all the ground;
Admire not them, but with more grateful eyes
To Heaven look, and their great Maker prize.
In a calm night the earth and heaven agree,
There radiant Stars, here brighter Flowers we see.”*

—RAPIN.

OCTOBER THIRTIETH.—I have just been reading *Adam in Eden, or Nature's Paradise*, by William Cole (1657), and I note the following:—

“Most certain it is, amongst all these transitory Entertainments of our Lives, there is none more suitable to the mind of man than this; for I dare boldly assert, that if there be any one that is become so much a Herbarist as to be delighted with the pleasant Aspects of Nature, so as to have walked a few turns in her Solitary Places, traced her Allies, viewed her severall imbroidered Beds, recreated and feasted himself with her Fragrances, the harmlesse Delights of her Fields and Gardens; He it is that hath embraced one of the greatest of our terrestriall Felicities. Hence it is, that Emperours, Princes, Heroes, and Persons of the most generous Qualifications have trod on their Scepters, sleighted their Thrones, cast away their Purples, and laid aside all other Exuberances of State, to court their Mother Earth in her own Dressings: Such Beauties there are to be discovered in Flowers, such Curiosities of Features to be found in Plants.”

How all these old Herbalists must have loved their gardens! I am sure the one lesson we can learn from them is thoroughness. We are not thorough nowadays. We are in too great a hurry to go to the root of things; but at the same time we enjoy life more, and love takes the place of duty.

*OCTOBER THIRTY-FIRST.**"MEADOW SWEET COTTAGE.*

"MONICA, MY BELOVED,—I have been planting bulbs, inspired by you, and my hair has nearly turned grey in the process. I ache to have a lovely spring garden, and I gave up a winter dress to buy a whole lot. I felt there was so much romance about a spring garden. Alas! all romance has fled. To you only I pour out my woes. I planted beds with Forget-me-nots and Maiden-blush Tulips. Whether the blushing maid was to say 'forget me not,' or whether the lover said 'forget me not' and the maiden blushed, I forget now, for I hate the word bulb. Then crocuses and snowdrops were duly planted, to make beds on the emerald grass of pearl and amethyst and gold. Isn't that a pretty idea, Monica? Afterwards, I turned to Moses and said, 'Now the daffodils, Moses, and the red tulips, where are they?' 'I'm sure I can't say, mum,' he answered. I said, 'But they were in that border, and that, and that,' pointing to my future dreams of loveliness. 'Then I 'specs they are there still, mum,' he said. Would you believe it, Monica, they were never taken up last year, and so all my care is wasted, and up will come daffodowndillies all among my forget-me-nots and pink tulips. I know that they will assert themselves, and that there will be a battle royal among the bulbs under the mould. I know the tiresome red tulips will beat the crocuses hollow, and I know I shall cry even in the merry spring-time, Oh! why was I ever born? Moses doesn't mind in the least; he laughed without changing countenance, which is so tiresome. He thought grape hyacinths were red hyacinths. Comfort me, Monica, comfort me. I know you will say it will be lovelier than ever, but you are wrong, cruelly wrong.—Ever your broken-hearted

CORNINA."

NOVEMBER FIRST.—ALL SAINTS' DAY.

THE dear old saying that "All Saints' Day brings the second summer" carries comfort to many a heart. In Sweden there is often warm still weather near this day which is called *All Saints' rest*. A rest from storm and trouble and pain, for all is lost in the perfect peace of Heaven. And the little troubles and partings here are merged in the Everlasting Life.

*"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break ;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph ;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."*

—BROWNING.

I refrain from filling up this day, for many there are who may like to add a date, or a verse, or a note of memory more in keeping with their own thoughts than mine can ever be.

NOVEMBER SECOND.—"This is peculiarly the month of the Greatest Work and Labour of all, in order to the avoiding the inconvenience of wanting *Garden* necessities, which is no ordinary Companion in the dead Season, for in earnest the cold fails not to make Great Havock in the *Gardens* of the lazy."—*The Compleat Gard'ner*.

"The Culture of Flowers is an Exercise that can never be too much commended, when it is used as a Recreation after any Employments that are more necessary. It furnishes our Houses with delightful Ornaments, and supplies us with Accommodations that we may share with others, without any Detriment. And as the Taste for Flowers, and the pleasure of disclosing them to the View of others, are almost inseparable, we may consider their Cultivation as an agreeable Band of Society. But they are equally charming in Solitude, and supply the Absence of Company to those who are alone."—*Nature Display'd*, 1736.

"I hope I shall not need any motives to encourage the green Herbarist to this study. If Pleasures may invite him, what fairer objects are there for the sight than these painted Braveries? What odours can ravish the sense of smelling more than those of Flowers?"—*Adam in Eden*.



NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER THIRD.—It interests me to note down jottings from old garden books and to learn what flowers bloomed in olden days. In the *Gardener's Kalendar* (1732) the plants now in flower (November) in the open air are "Some sorts of late Starworts, two or three sorts of Golden-rods, Annual Stock Gilly-flower, Double Colchicum, Heart's-ease or Pansies, three or four sorts of Perennial Sunflowers, Plumbago or Leadwort, Indian Scabious, Iron-coloured Fox-Glove, Old Man's Head Pink, Antirrhinum, Tansey-leaved Ox-eye; and if the season is mild, some Single Anemonies, and Polyanthus Narcissuses, where they were not removed the last summer; as also the Purple Ragwort, Eupatoriums, Clinopodiums, and Helenias."

All I can say is we have not half the flowers they had then, though I can still pluck a "basket" of tea roses, and our *Solanum Jasmenoides* is white with bloom.

*"If there's ice in November that will bear a duck,
There'll be nothing after but sludge and muck."*

*"Time flyes away fast ;
Our houres doe waste :
The while we never remember,
How soone our life, here,
Growes old with the yeere,
That dyes with the next December."*

—HERRICK.

NOVEMBER FOURTH.—Why is it that the Heart's-ease has more pretty old names bestowed upon it than any other flower? I know not. Here are a few: Pencie, Three-faces-under-a-hood, Herb Trinity, Call-me-to-you, Love-in-Idleness, Ladies' Delight, Flower of Love, Herbe Constancy, Pawnee, Tickle-my-fancy, Jump-up-and-kiss-me. There are many other names, but I have given sufficient for one day.

“At the foot of the stately Flowers I discern a Pansy, which discloses nothing remarkable; one would imagine it wanted Resolution to make its Appearances. It promises but little at a distance; but the moment we approach it, we find ourselves delighted with a refreshing Fragrance, and a Profusion of peculiar Graces, . . . it is graced with a Fineness of Texture, and a Glow of Purple that nothing can imitate; the softest Velvets, when compared with this little Flower, appear like Canvas to the Eye.” This is from *Nature Display'd*, 1736.

Shakespeare gives a fancy picture:—

“*That any time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold Moon and the Earth,
Cupid all armed! a certain aim he took,
At a fair Vestrel, throned by the West,
And loosed his loveshaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery Moon,
And the imperial votress passed on,
In maiden meditation fancy free.
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell,
It fell upon a little western flower;
Before milk white, now purple with Love's wound,
And Maidens call it Love in idleness.*”

NOVEMBER FIFTH.—Gunpowder Plot, of course ! 1605. I dare not write of flowers on this day. I have been looking up bonfires, and must here note all I find :—

“In the months of June and July, on the vigils of festival days, and on the evenings also of those days after sunset, bonfires were made in the streets (in London). The wealthy citizens placed bread and good drink upon the tables before their doors upon the vigil of the festival, but on the festival evening the same tables were more plentifully furnished with meat and drink, to which not only the neighbours but passengers were also invited to sit and partake, with great hospitality. These were called bonfires, as well of amity among neighbours that, being before at controversie, were, at these times, by the labour of others, reconciled, and made of bitter enemies loving friends ; and also for the virtue that a great fire hath to purge the infection of the air.”

It seems a pity we cannot have such *bon* fires nowadays, in every town and village, and make “of bitter enemies loving friends.”

In Poor Robin’s *Almanack*, so long ago as 1677, are the following lines :—

“*Now boys with squibs and crackers play,
And bonfires’ blaze turns night to day.*”

So after all things are not much changed. Year in year out the old traditions come into play again, and the last generation shakes its head at the new generation and pretends to much virtue, but fortunately for them the present is present and the past far out of sight.

NOVEMBER SIXTH.

*"Farewell, ye withered flowers,
That on the cold ground lie ;
How gay ye smiled
'Mid the brown wild
'Neath summer's painted sky.*

*Passed hath your bloom away,
Your stalks are sere and bent ;
On the howling blast
The rain sweeps past
From the dim firmament.*

*I think me of your pride
When zephyrs come with spring ;
Then sigh to know
What wreck and woe
A few brief months may bring."*

—MOIR.

*"The day is cold, and dark, and dreary ;
It rains, and the wind is never weary ;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.*

*My life is cold, and dark, and dreary ;
It rains, and the wind is never weary ;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick on the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.*

*Be still, sad heart ! and cease repining ;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining ;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary."*

—LONGFELLOW.

NOVEMBER SEVENTH.

CORINNA DEAR,—I have found what you want, in quite an old book, *Conversations on Botany* (1820). Certainly the child asks many foolish questions ; but as you say I never put things plainly, I thought I had better answer you in language other than my own, and then you cannot jeer.

“*Trees* are plants that bear flowers for several years in succession ; which, after sending up a lofty trunk, are divided at the top into many branches.

“A *Shrub* is like a small tree, with a woody stem, which lasts many years also, but begins to be divided into branches near the ground.

“*Herbs*, or *Herbaceous* plants, have soft, not woody stems. If they bear leaves and seeds within one year and then die, they are called *Annuals* ; when they bear leaves in the first year, and flowers in the second, and then die, they are *Biennials* ; and if they live and flower for more years than two, they are called *Perennials*.”

I hope you will be puzzled no longer, and that your garden will be a glory next year.

“The hard point of the *Yucca* leaf was the needle Adam used to sew the leaves together, so it is often called Adam’s needle.”

“Therefore you see that the thorn gives a medicine for its own pricking, and so doth almost every thing else.”—
CULPEPPER.

NOVEMBER EIGHTH.—The following lines are entrusted to the care of my Kalendar :—

IN CITY PENT.

*“The grey town, with uncanny spells,
For fifty weeks my life enthralls,
Holds me, unguarded, in its cells,
Engirds me with unsentried walls.*

*What day I choose I may escape,
And loose my unsubstantial things,
Fling off my yoke with curse or jape,
And bid me where my heart belongs.*

*When the breeze stirs amid the planes,
And blue skies mock the dusty street,
Then comes a vision of harvest wains
And yellow fields of whispering wheat.*

*With broom, and heather, and blazing whin
Each window box my fancy fills,
And e’en the water-carts begin
To murmur of the moorland ghylls.*

*And still, by power of the magic black—
Fast with invisible fetters bound—
The spell of the city holds me back
Until my holiday comes round.*

*And then, too swift to note how fast,
My hours of freedom glide away,
Before my city slough is cast
My days once more are work-a-day !”*

NOVEMBER NINTH.—I think the following extract from Erasmus Darwin is most interesting, relating to colour :—

“The colours of insects and many smaller animals contribute to conceal them from the larger ones which prey upon them. Caterpillars which feed on leaves are generally green ; and earthworms the colour of the earth which they inhabit ; butterflies which frequent flowers are coloured like them ; small birds which frequent hedges have greenish backs like the leaves, and light-coloured bellies like the sky, and are hence less visible to the hawk, who passes under them or over them. Those birds which are much among flowers, as the goldfinch, are furnished with vivid colours. The lark, partridge, hare, are the colour of dry vegetables or earth on which they rest. And frogs vary their colour with the mud of the streams which they frequent ; and those which live on trees are green. Fish, which are generally suspended in water, and swallows, which are generally suspended in air, have their backs the colour of the distant ground, and their bellies of the sky. In the colder climates many of these become white during the existence of the snows.

“Also the unicorn moth, which flies only at night, its brilliant colours contribute to its safety, by making it mistaken by the late sleeping birds for the flower it rests on.”

NOVEMBER TENTH.

AUTUMN.

*"The Autumn is old,
The sere leaves are flying ;
He hath gathered up gold,
And now he is dying ;
Old age, begin sighing !*

*The vintage is ripe,
The harvest is heaping ;
But some that have sowed
Have no riches for reaping ;
Poor wretch, fall a-weeping !*

*The years in the wane,
There is nothing adorning,
The night has no eve,
And the day has no morning ;
Cold winter gives warning.*

*The rivers run chill,
The red sun is sinking,
And I am grown old,
And life is past shrinking ;
Here's enow for sad thinking !"*

—TOM HOOD.

*"Love, if you knew the light
That your soul casts in my sight,
How I look to you
For the pure and true,
And the beauteous and the right,—
Bear with a moment's spite
When a mere mote threatens the white !"*

—BROWNING.

NOVEMBER ELEVENTH. — Martinmas. To-day Martinalia is celebrated, or the drinking health to the Memory of St. Martin, practised by our Saxon and Danish ancestors. In our old Church calendars we find mentioned "The Martinalia, a genial feast, wines are tasted of and drawn from the lees."

*"It is the day of Martilmasse,
Cuppes of ale should freely passe ;
What though Wynter has begunne
To push downe the Summer sunne,
To our fire we can betake
And enjoye the crackling brake,
Never heedinge Winter's face
On the day of Martilmasse.*

*When the dailie sports be done,
Round the market crosse they runne,
Prentis laddes, and gallant blades
Dancing with their gamesome maids,
Till the Beadel, stout and sowre,
Shakes his bell, and calls the houre ;
Then farewell ladde and farewell lasse
To the merry night of Martilmasse.*

*Martilmasse shall come againe,
Spite of wind, and snow, and raine ;
But many a strange thing must be done,
Many a cause be lost and won,
Many a tool must leave his pelfe,
Many a worldinge cheat himselfe,
And many a marvel come to passe,
Before return of Martilmasse."*

—"Time's Telescope," 1814.

NOVEMBER TWELFTH. — What a lovely day !
Verily St. Martin's Summer, and I can bask in the sunshine.

*" Expect St. Martin's Summer ;
Halcyon days."*

'Twas Shakespeare wrote thus. I remember now the kingfisher is called "Martin Pecheur." In the old legends these birds were supposed to breed very late in the year. Ruskin writes : "These birds, in the winter time, build their nests, and lay their eggs, and hatch their young on the sea ; and the sea is quiet in these days, which the sailors call the Halcyonia."

*" As, when in the wintry month
Zeus gives the wisdom of calm to fourteen days,
Then the people of the land call it
The hour of wind-hiding, the sacred
Nurse of the spotted Halcyon."*

Every one of course knows Milton's lines—

*" But peaceful was the night,
Wherein the Prince of light
His reign of peace upon earth begun :
The winds with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kist,
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave."*

There is no bird so beautiful as this "gem of the water."
Drayton writes—

*" There came the halcyon, whom the sea obeys,
When she her nest upon the water lays."*

And Keats—

*" O Magic sleep ; O comfortable bird
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of wind
Till it is hush'd and smooth."*

NOVEMBER THIRTEENTH.—I have lately had rather an uncommon visitor to my garden, a fine cock Hawfinch, who has interested me, not so much by his habits and his waddling walk, as by his rarity. In some parts of the country these birds are more often met with, though they are not at all common anywhere; but here, except when hard weather forces them to share the feasts I put out for more familiar birds, I never see them. They are at all times rather retiring in their habits, and quiet and unobtrusive, and I have never heard them make any note but a kind of squeak, rather resembling the cry of the tree-creeper but not so loud.

Last summer a weasel was shot in a field of peas near the house; he had a young Hawfinch in his mouth, which proves that, however harmful the weasel may be to the farmer's chickens, on this occasion at least he was his active friend, and was only helping to save the pea crop from the ravages of greedy birds.

The hawfinch is a handsome though not brightly coloured bird, being of a brown colour with ash and chestnut markings, and having a white bar on the wings. The most noticeable feature is the immense bill, which is generally horn colour, but in the case of my present visitor is quite flesh coloured, indeed almost white in some lights, so that he is, I imagine, a bird of many summers. I once had a hawfinch in a cage, and found he would eat berries of all kinds except the hips of the wild rose, which he would not touch. He was very partial to holly berries, cracking the hard seeds with his powerful bill, but discarding altogether the bright red husk which we so much admire.

NOVEMBER FOURTEENTH.—From the *Book of Brutes*, 1670 :—

“The *Elephant* is a vast creature, but very deformed ; his tayl it is like a Cedar, and yet it is of no use to him, but only to keep him from the Flyes. He hath two teeth which weigh 325. pound are called ivory, of which are made posts, pales, hedges, and styes for *Hoggs*. His foot steps, the diameter of which was seen to be 3. hands and a thumb. He hath a snout which he maketh use of to take up his fodder, which he can extend 10. cubits in length : he loveth to be in waterish and fenny places ; untill he is hindered from taking breath by some weeds, &c., which hang over his snout. He never sleepeth lying ; for if he should once lye down he could never get up again. As to the taking of Elephants there be divers wayes, whether they take them alive or dead. . . . Those who would take them alive mark the paths that they are seen most commonly to go in, and there they dig a pit so cunningly that the Elephant coming along her old paths as she used to do, being not aware of it falleth in to it. As soon as she is in, she is by three or four men beaten upon her tenderest parts very smartly untill she is almost mad ; when they have so done, cometh another Huntsman who deploareth her condition, and threateneth the former Huntsmen, and giveth her some of the juice of barley as also some meat, and this he often doth, coming to the pit and asking him whether he will come out or no, until by degrees the *Elephant* begins to know him, and to yeild to him in any thing.”

NOVEMBER FIFTEENTH.—Read this pretty description of the Queen of the Fairies at night.

“*High, on her brow sublime, is borne
One scarlet woodbine’s tremulous horn ;
A gaudy Bee-bira’s triple plume
Sheds on her neck its waving gloom ;
With silvery gossamer entwin’d
Stream the luxuriant locks behind ;
One rose-leaf forms her crimson vest,
The loose edge crosses o’er her breast ;
And one translucent fold, that fell
From the tall lily’s ample bell,
Forms with sweet grace her snow-white train,
Flows, as she steps, and sweeps the plain.
Now the waked reed-finch swells his throat,
And night-larks trill their mingled note ;
Yet hush’d in moss with writhed neck
The blackbird hides his golden beak ;
Charm’d from his dream of love, he wakes,
Opes his gay eye, his plumage shakes,
And, stretching wide his ebon wing,
First in low whispers tries to sing ;
Then sounds his clarion loud, and thrills
The moon-bright lawns, and shadowy hills,
Silent the choral Fays attend,
And then their silver voices blend,
Each shining thread of sound prolong,
And weave the magic woof of song:
Pleased Philomela takes her stand
On high, and leads the Fairy band,
Pours sweet at intervals her strain,
And guides with beating wing the train,
Whilst interrupted Zephyrs bear
Hoarse murmurs from the distant weir.”*

—MUNDY.

NOVEMBER SIXTEENTH.—I have copied the following from *Nature's Paradise*, 1657. The author is urging us to the study of Flowers :—

“If We rightly consider the Addresses of this Divine Contemplation of Herbs and Plants, with what alluring Steps and Paces the Study of them directs Us to an admiration of the Supream Wisdome ; we cannot but even from these inferiour things arrive somewhat near unto a heavenly Contentment ; a contentment indeed next to that Blessedness of Fruition, which is onely in the other World ; for all our pleasures here having but the fading Aids of Sense are beholding, or rather subjected to our humane Frailties so that they must in respect of our Expectations in some kind or other ever fall short.”

This old writing fascinates me. “*Arrive somewhat near unto a heavenly Contentment.*” That is just my feeling about a garden, at least when the lilies bloom and the roses blow. There are times of discontent, alas ! when flowers do not answer to the call of love and beds are bare.

“*The damasked meadowes and the pebbly streams
Sweeten and make soft your dreams :
The purling springs, groves, birds, and well weaved bowers,
With fields enamellèd with flowers,
Present their shapes, while fantasy discloses
Millions of lillies mixed with Roses.*”

—HERRICK.

NOVEMBER SEVENTEENTH.—A considerable flock of golden-crested wrens have for the past two days taken possession of the fir tree near the house. At first I mistook them for the smaller Titmice, whose habits they closely resemble; but a nearer approach showed me the more slender body and gilded crown of this our smallest and daintiest of birds. They were so fearless, that, if I had wished, I could have knocked over the boldest of the flock with my walking-stick. These birds were no doubt migrants from some colder clime, as large numbers reach our shore annually for protection against the life-destroying cold of northern Europe. How strange it is, that these frail, diminutive birds should apparently be able to stand our wintry weather, when on occasions numbers of our strong rooks succumb to its grasp.

In the long ago I saw a similar flock of gold crests in a fir plantation in Cheshire. On this occasion I was carrying a muzzle-loading gun, and, being anxious to secure one of the birds without hurting it, I put a small quantity of water into the barrel instead of shot. I fired at the nearest bird, and so completely drenched him, that he fell to the ground, a draggled little fellow, quite unable for the moment to fly. Picking him up, I took him into a greenhouse and let him fly. An hour later the captive was as sprightly as ever, and quite tame. The shock was, however, too great, and next morning when I went to release him I found my poor gold-crest was dead! The song of the gold-crest is very feeble, but he is a brave, bold little bird, and guards his nest with great courage.

NOVEMBER EIGHTEENTH.—“In the study of natural Things, true Philosophy is never limited to the Contemplation of their Mechanism, but extends its Curiosity to the Benefits they produce. We are easily sensible of the Intercourse that appears between the Flowers, the Air, and the Sun-Beams ; and can we possibly be unacquainted with that Goodness which is so attentive to make this Correspondence advantageous to Man ? He is treated like a Sovereign in each Particular. Providence has not only enamel’d his Way with Flowers, for the Entertainment of His View, but he has taken care to embalm and purify the Air he breathes, by shedding the noblest Perfumes in his Passage.”—*Nature Display’d*.

“For truly from all sorts of Herbes and Flowers we may draw matter at all times not only to magnifie the Creator that hath given them such diversities of formes, sents, and colours, that the most cunning Worke-man can imitate, and such vertues and properties, that although wee know many, yet many more lye hidden and unknowne, but many good instructions also to ourselves.”—PARKINSON, 1629.

“I hope I shall not need any motives to encourage the green Herbarist to this study. If Pleasures may invite him, what fairer objects are there for the sight than these painted Braveries ? what odours can resist the sense of smelling more than those of flowers ?”—W. COLE, 1657.

NOVEMBER NINETEENTH. — Here is a pretty description of a garden to bring the thought of summer to my heart. I weary for the spring-time !

“They had stocked their garden therefore with the gayest and the sweetest flowers that were cultivated in those days ; larkspurs, both of the giant and dwarf species, and of all colours ; sweet-williams of the richest hues ; monk’s-hood for its stately growth ; Betsy called it the dumbledore’s delight, and was not aware that the plant, in whose helmet- rather than cowl-shaped flowers that busy and best natured of all insects appears to revel more than in any other, is the deadly aconite of which she read in poetry : the white lily, and the fleur-de-lis ; poenies, which are still the glory of the English garden : stocks and gilliflowers which make the air sweet as the gales of Arabia ; wall-flowers, which for awhile are little less fragrant, and not less beautiful ; pinks and carnations added their spicy odours ; roses, red and white, peeped at the lower casements, and the jessimine climbed to those of the chambers above. You must nurse your own flowers, if you would have them flourish.”—ROBERT SOUTHEY.

This is very true. No one really enjoys a garden until they have one “of their very own,” as children say. Then every plant becomes a friend, and every flower a joy.

NOVEMBER TWENTIETH.

FLOWERS FOR SAINTS' DAYS.

*"The Snowdrop in purest white arraie
First rears his head on Candlemas Daie,
While the Crocus hastens to the shrine
Of Primrose love on St. Valentine.
Then comes the Daffodil beside
Our Ladies' Smock at oure Lady Tyde,
Against St. George when blue is worn,
The blue Harebells the fields adorn,
While on the day of the Holy Cross,
The Crowfoot gilds the flowerie grasse.
When St. Barnaby bright smiles night and day,
Poor Ragged Robin blooms in the hay.
The scarlet Lychnis, the garden's pride,
Flames on St. John the Baptist's tide.
Against St. Swithin's hastie Showers,
The Lily white reigns Queen of Flowers;
And Poppies a sanguine mantle spread,
For the blood of the dragon St. Margaret shed.
Till Lammas Day, called August's Wheel,
When the long corn stinks of Camomile.
When Mary left us here below,
The Virgin's Bower begins to blow;
And yet anon the full Sunflower blew,
And became a star for Bartholomew.
The Passion Flower full long has blowed
To betoken us signs of the Holy Rood.
The Michaelmas Daisy, amonge dead weeds,
Blooms for St. Michael's valorous deeds,
And seems the last of flowers that stood
Till the Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude.
Save Mushrooms and the Fungus race,
That grow as Allhallowtide takes place.
Soon the evergreen Laurel alone is seen,
When Catherine crowns all learned men,
Then Ivy and Holy Berries are seen,
And Yule Clog and Wassail come round again."*

NOVEMBER TWENTY-FIRST.—I never knew till to-day that a bay tree brings good luck. I must hasten and plant one at once in my Garden of Peace. The ancients believed that the bay tree was a protection from lightning. In some villages it is planted as a protection against fire. "The ancients also attributed to the bay the property of preserving corn from mildew. Amongst the other wonders related of the bay, its decay was said to be ominous of some fatal accident. Before the death of Nero all the bay trees withered."

Evelyn tells us that in 1629, preceding a great pestilence at Padua, almost all the bay trees about that famous university grew sick and perished.

When bay leaves are thrown into the fire to draw a good augury, the leaves must crackle. In olden days folks put them beneath their pillows at night, to obtain prophetic dreams; and they were planted around their dwellings to bring good luck. It crowns conquerors, and is also the most glorious attribute of clemency. Hence our expression Poet Laureate.

"Students who have taken their degrees are called bachelor, from the French *Bachelier*, which is derived from the Latin *Baccalureus* (laurel and berries)."

Turner, in 1564, writes: "The bay tre in England is no great tre, but it thryveth there many partes better and is lustier than in Germany."

NOVEMBER TWENTY-SECOND.—I had an interesting discussion to-day on the origin of flower names. A friend of mine who has studied the subject tells me that in all languages flowers are often called after the different parts of animals, also that “the Indians who have preserved for a long time their pastoral habits possess the richest collection.” Take for example (and the names can be found in many European languages), Dog bane, Dog tooth violet, Hound’s tongue, Dog grass, Dog’s tail, Dogwood; again Cows lip, Cow bane, Cat’s ear, Cat’s tail, Dragon’s foot, Lark’s spur, Lark’s heel, and many more, too numerous to attempt to write here.

Forbes Watson, writing on this subject, says, “It is from dim suggestions (of the *impressions* of flowers), that our ancestors have drawn our present names of flowers, sometimes with deep insight and poetic truth, sometimes with all sorts of flighty and fantastic colouring, lent by medicine, astrology, or alchemy. To take a few examples: In Bee Orchis, Turk’s Cap Lily, Corn blue-bottle, the resemblance is unmistakably clear, the last name of course pointing at the swollen look of the flower-cup; Archangel, Lady’s Fingers, Cuckoo Pint, and Cowslip, are more indefinite; you feel them to be true, but you cannot perhaps say why.” “Solomon’s Seal” he cannot understand, but in R. C. Prior’s book I find this explanation: “Solomon’s Seal, from the flat round scars on the root stock, resembling what is called a Solomon’s seal, a name given by Arabs to a six-pointed star, formed by two equilateral triangles intersecting each other, and of frequent occurrence in Oriental tales.” Parkinson says Solomon’s Seal is called Ladder to Heaven “from the forme of the stalke of the leaves, one being set above the other.”

NOVEMBER TWENTY-THIRD.—Why is it I can write to you what I cannot say? It seems so strange that we can commit our heart's outpouring to paper, and when together we are silent. As the clouds hurry across the sky, and a scud of rain dashes the window, a fear of winter comes over me, and spring-time seems so infinitely far away. Will the birds sing again? and the flowers bloom once more? Will the green leaves open? and the snow-drops blow? Shall I be here then to hear and see? Emerson feels with me; he writes in his Essay on Friendship:—

“To my friend I write a letter, and from him I receive a letter. That seems to me a little. It suffices me. It is a spiritual gift worthy of him to give, and of me to receive. It profanes nobody. In these warm lines the heart will trust itself, as it will not to the tongue, and pour out the prophecy of a godlier existence than all the annals of heroism have yet made good.”

This is what I would fain try to express. Yet there are times when even a friend fails to understand, and only Nature fits into my mood. The red of a sunset, a wild flower, the blue distance, a bird singing, and all at once an answer comes to my heart to some unspoken question, and I suddenly *understand*. Sometimes love's whisper from a flower tells me all I want to know. Do you not often-times feel a sudden uplifting above this workaday world on to a higher plane, and realise the nearness of the Infinite?

NOVEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH.

From *A Queen's Delight*, 1656.

“TO CANDY OR CLEAR ROCKANDY FLOWERS.

“Take spices and boyl them in a syrup of Sugar, then put in the flowers, boyl them till they be stiffe; when you spread them on a paper, lay them on round Wyers in an earthen pan; then take as much hard Sugar as will fill your pan, and as much water as will melt the Sugar, that is half a pint to every pound, then beat a dozen spoonfuls of fair water, and the white of an Egge in a Bason, with a Birchin rod till it come to a froth; when your Sugar is all melted and boyled, put the froth of the Egge in the hot Syrup, and as it riseth drop in a little cold water; so let it boyle a little while, then scum it, then boyle it to a Candie hight; that is, when you may draw it in small threads between your finger and your thumb; then pour forth all your syrup that will run from it in your pan, then set it a drying one hour or two; which done, pick up the Wyers, and take off the Flowers, and lay them in papers, and so dry them.”

“TO CANDY SPANISH FLOWERS.

“Take the Blossoms of divers sorts of flowers, and make a syrup of water and Sugar, and boyl it very thick, then put in your blossoms and stir them in their boyling, till it turn to Sugar again, then stir them with the back of a spoon, till the Sugar fall from it; so you may keep them for sallets all the year.”

NOVEMBER TWENTY-FIFTH.

MONICA, BELOVÈD,—This is St. Catherine's Day. Did you know she was a patroness of spinsters? And that it was an old custom for young women to meet for merry-making, and they called it "Cathar'ning"? I have asked all the old maids I know to tea and mean to have a huge merry-making without even a curate. Now I want your advice. Pray give unto me your undivided attention. I am laying out my garden and have been reading some of your old books. I am dying to build a Belvidere in my garden, "a Belvidere or Pavillion of Aurora, which are as pleasant to rest ones self in, after a long walk, as they are to the Eye, for the handsome prospect they yeild." Doesn't that sound inviting? I long for you to sit with me in my Belvidere and lecture on the "Loves of Plants." I mean also to have a *Parterre Fleuriste*. I don't know what it is, but evidently it is quite "the thing." Also Groves, Quincunces, Verdant Halls, Arbor Work, Alleys, Labyrinths, and Close-walks. (These last I do not consider are quite proper.) Did you know that a "Quincunce in its original Signification was a Plantation of Trees, like the Cinque Points of a Die repeated"? This may convey something to you, but it conveys nothing on earth to me. Then of course I shall go in for such trifles as Parterres of Embroidery, and the like. Oh, Monica! there never was such a garden as mine will be. When you come you must mind and powder your hair. As you would say, "Everything must be in rhyme."—Yours ever,

CORINNA.

NOVEMBER TWENTY-SIXTH.—“At present we frequently make Thorough-Views, call'd *Ah*, *Ah*, which are openings in the Walls, without Grills, to the very level of the Walks, with a large and deep Ditch at the Foot of them, lined on both Sides to sustain the Earth, and prevent the getting over, which surprises the Eye upon coming near it, and makes one cry *Ah! Ah!* from whence it takes its name.”—*The Theory and Practise of Gardening*, 1709.

Horace Walpole in his Essay on Gardens tells us, “But the capital stroke, the leading step to all that has followed, was the destruction of walls for boundaries, and the invention of fosses . . . an attempt then deemed so astonishing that the common people called them *Ha! Ha's!* to express their surprise at finding a sudden and unperceived check to their walk.”

I always thought that either you came suddenly on to a beautiful view and at once exclaimed thereat, or that the sunken hedge was made of hawthorn and therefore it was called a “*Haw Haw.*” I mean some day to make one between our lawn and wild garden so that our eyes may wander from the soft green sward to broom and heather. Now that the leaves are off it is the time to cut out views, and let in peeps of the Beyond which adds so much to the beauty and grace and *romance* of a garden.

NOVEMBER TWENTY-SEVENTH. — I saw two magpies to-day.

*“ One for sorrow,
Two for mirth,
Three for a wedding,
Four for a birth.”*

How passing foolish one is to be superstitious. Clare writes of—

*“ Brazen magpies, fond of clack,
Full of insolence and pride,
Chattering on the donkey's back
Perch'd, and pull'd his shaggy hide ;
Odd crows settled on the path,
Dames from milking trotting home
Said the sign foreboded wrath,
And shook their heads at ills to come.”*

I never heard tell before that it was unlucky to see odd crows on our path. The hooting of owls at nightfall often frightens folks out of their wits, and the spilling of salt too, unless you hasten to fling a pinch over your left shoulder. If you put on any garment inside out it is unlucky to right the wrong. You must never cross hands when friends meet friends. You must bow to the new moon, and see it not first through glass. If a glass rings unless you stop it before the sound dies you will loose the friendship of one you hold right dear. It is unlucky of course to help any one to salt, for you will undoubtedly quarrel, or give them a knife or scissors. Ah, me ! I will not pen further nonsense ; I hold it wrong to think anything is unlucky. We have too much faith, surely, to be troubled by foolish old wives' tales.

NOVEMBER TWENTY-EIGHTH.—"The Flowers, by their Succession, entertain us with a splendid Feast, wrought into Decorations that succeed each other, in a regular order. The flow'ry Liverwort, Cowslips, Violets, Hyacinths, Auriculas, Lillies of the Valley, Daffodils, and Wind-Flowers, present us, if I may use the Expression, with the first Act.

"These disappear, for the most part, and resign their places to Imperial Crowns, Arabian Beans, Flower-de-Luces, Jonquils, the Ranunculus, and all the Flowers that, at present, crown this Parterre. The distant Fruit trees intermix their softest Colours with the rising Verdure, and heighten the glow of the Parterre.

"You may at the same time see the opening Bloom of the Rose-Bush, the Lilly, the Julian, the Gilliflower, the Gold-Locks, the Mithridate-Mustard, the Carnation and Poppy. Their stems and Buds are fortified by insensible growth; and these are the Preparations for the Array of Summer.

"Autumn will afterwards unfold the Pyramidal, the Balsamine, the Turnsole, the Tube rose, the Amaranth, the Indian-Pink, the Meadow Saffron, with a variety of other Species.

"Then Winter draws her sable Curtain."—*Nature Display'd*, 1736.

I love, at this time of the year, to read of gardens, to search out old flower names, and to dream of the Spring, which seems so far far away.

NOVEMBER TWENTY-NINTH.

THE SISKIN.

If you should chance to have any alder trees growing by the side of your river, it would be worth while to pay them a visit, to see if by chance you may find a flock of siskins on them. These birds, though they feed on many other seeds, are most partial to those of the alder, and it is a pretty sight when the trees are bare of all save their berries, to watch these pretty lemon-green coloured birds as they flit, and hang about the branches, keeping up a perpetual chatter the while. The male is rather more brightly coloured than the female, from whom he can also be easily distinguished by his darker head. I do not myself much admire the song of the siskin which is of a rather creaky kind, but there are few birds who are more constant singers, and for this reason they are often kept in aviaries as they induce the other birds to sing by their own perpetual warbling.

They very rarely stay with us to nest, but are winter visitors, and leave us for the north about April ; neither are they at all common, which is the more to be regretted as they are both pretty and lively in their habits. In *The Birds of Surrey* I note that in this country "they usually arrive about the middle of October, but sometimes not till later, and band together in small flocks with goldfinches and lesser redpolls." The River Wey runs at the foot of our hill, and siskins love the Wey.

NOVEMBER THIRTIETH.

*“ Farewell to autumn and her yellow bowers,
Her waning skies and fields of sallow hue,
Farewell, ye perishing and perish'd flowers,
Ye shall revive when vernal skies are blue.
But now the tempest cloud of winter lowers,
Frosts are severe, and snowflakes not a few ;
Lifting their leafless boughs against the breeze,
Forlorn appear the melancholy trees.”*

“ The comparative value of a yew with other trees, in former times, may be seen from the following table, taken from the ancient laws of Wales :—

“ A consecrated yew, its value is one pound.

An oak, its value is six score pence.

A mistletoe branch, its value is three score pence.

Thirty pence is the value of every principal branch of an oak.

Three score pence is the value of every sweet apple-tree.

Thirty pence is the value of a sour apple-tree.

Fifteen pence is the value of a wood yew-tree.

Seven pence half penny is the value of a thorn-tree.

Four pence is the value of every tree after that.”

Yews were always planted in church-yards as emblems of immortality.

DECEMBER FIRST.—"As soon as December is come it is no longer time to dally. And above all things, we must be careful to preserve those *Novelties* which we have begun to advance by *Art*, as Peas, Lettuce, and little *Sallets*, to avoid the displeasure of seeing perish in one bitter Night, what we have been labouring two or three months to advance."—*The Compleat Gard'ner*, 1649.

In winter time I sit and dream of

"A garden bower'd close
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender:
Whither in after life retired
From brawling storms,
From weary wind,
With youthful fancy re-inspired,
We may hold converse, with all forms
Of the many-sided mind." . . .

—TENNYSON.

"The plaintive note of the 'shilfa' or 'sheely' (chaffinch) is interpreted as a sign of rain. When, therefore, the boys hear it, they first imitate it, and then rhymingly refer to the expected consequences—

"Weet, weet!
Dreep, dreep!"

DECEMBER SECOND.

"If you with Flow'rs would stock the pregnant Earth,
 Mark well the Moon propitious to their Birth :
 For Earth the silent Midnight Queen obeys,
 Observes her Course, who clad in Silver Rays
 Th' eternal round of Times and Seasons guides,
 Controls the Air, and o'er the Wind presides.
 Four Days expir'd you have your time to sow,
 From Moons encreasing till full-orb'd they grow ;
 This past, your Labour you in vain bestow.
 Nor let the Gard'ner dare to plant a Flow'r,
 While in his Work the Heaven's ill-boding low'r ;
 When Moons forbid, forbidding Moons obey,
 And hasten when the Stars inviting Beams display."

—RAPIN.

"Some of the Ancients, and likewise divers of the
 Moderne Writers, that have laboured in *Naturall Magick*,
 have noted a *Sympathy*, between the *Sunne*, *Moone*, and some
 Principall *Starres* ; And certaine Herbs, and *Plants*. And so
 they have denominated some *Herbs Solar*, and some *Lunar* ;
 and such like Toyes put into great Words. It is manifest,
 that there are some Flowers, that have *Respect* to the *Sunne*,
 in two *Kindes* ; The one by *Opening* and *Shutting* ; and the
 other by *Bowing* and *Inclining* the *Head*. For *Mary-Golds*,
Tulippas, *Pimpernell*, and indeed most *Flowers*, doe open
 or spread their *Leaves* abroad, when the *Sunne* shineth
 serene and faire : And againe, (in some part) close them,
 or gather them inward, either towards *Night*, or when the
Skie is overcast. . . . For the *Bowing* and *Inclining* of the
Head ; it is found in the great *Flower* of the *Sunne* ; in
Mary-golds ; *Wart-wort* ; *Mallow Flowers* ; and others."—
 BACON, *Sylva Sylvarum*.



DECEMBER

DECEMBER THIRD.—Yes, I agree with Parkinson, whether flowers are double or single it matters not as long as they are natural. Though I own to loving white lilac at Christmas time, I always feel sorry for over-forced flowers. They always look *tired*. Parkinson writes: “For nature still bendeth and tendeth to perfection, that is, after flow’ring to give fruit or seede. . . . All double flowers were so found wilde, being the worke of nature alone, and not the art of any man, by planting or transplanting, at or before the newe or full Moone, or any other observation of time, that hath caused the flower to grow double, that naturally was single: Secondly, that the rules and directions, to cause flowers to be of contrary or different colours and sents, from what they were or would be naturally, are mere fancies of men, without any ground of reason or truth. And thirdly, there is no power or art in man to cause flowers to shew their beauty divers moneths before their naturall time, nor to abide in their beauty longer than the appointed naturall time for every one of them. Although I do confesse and acknowledge, that I thinke some constellations, and peradventure changes of the Moone were appointed by the God of nature, as conducing and helping to the making of those flowers double, that nature hath so produced; yet doe I deny, that any man hath or shall ever be able to prove, that it was done by the art of man.”

DECEMBER FOURTH.—Here is a delightful passage I have just found.

“Let us but take a turn or two in a well-contriv’d and plant’d *Garden* ; and see what a surprizing *Scene* presents it self in the *Vernal Bloom*, diffusing its fragrand and Odoriferous *Wafts*, with their ravishing sweets : The tender *Blossoms*, curiously enamell’d ; the variously-figur’d Shapes of the verdant *Foliage*, dancing about, and *Immant’ling* the laden *Branches* of the choicest *Fruit* ; some hiding their blushing *Cheeks* ; others displaying their *Beauties*, and even Courting the *Eye* to *Admire* ; others the *Hand* to *Gather*, and all of them to taste their delicious *Pulps*. Can any thing be more delightful, than to behold an *ample Square* (in a benign *Aspect*) tapestred and adorn’d with such a glorious Embroidery of *Festoons*, and *Frutages*, depending from the yielding *Boughs*, pregnant with their Offspring, and pouring forth their Plenty and Store, as out of so many Amalthean Horns ? Some tinctur’d with the loveliest *White* and *Red* ; others, an Azurine-Purple ; others strip’d with *Incarnadine*, as over a *Tissue* of *Vegetable Gold*, *Colours* of an *Oriency*, that mock the pencil of the most exquisite *Artist* ; and with which their native *Beauty*, *Perfume*, *Fragrancy*, and *Taste*, Gratifie and Entertain more Senses at once, than does any Sublunary Object, in all un-vitiated *Nature* besides.”—1649.

DECEMBER FIFTH.—I sit me down in my Garden Room to muse. Will Swallow-day ever come? Sunshine seems a long way off, and yet—yet— Idly I turn the leaves of an old old book lying near at hand, and I turn the pages. Here is a passage on Swallows :—

“ Swallows seem to have a different Procedure. Multitudes of them, as it is pretended, cross the Sea. But the accounts from *England* and *Sweden* make it evident, that several, or at least those of the most Northern Countries, continue in *Europe*, and conceal themselves in the Caverns of the Earth riveted to one another with their Claws and Bills. They flock to places unfrequented by Man, or even bury themselves in the Water. The Precaution they take to lubricate their feathers with their own Oil, and to roll themselves up like a Ball, their Head within, and their Back without, preserves them in the Water, and even under the Ice. They are there benumb'd, and pass the whole Winter without Motion. The Heart however has a constant Palpitation, and the Warmth unchills them at the Return of Spring. They then revisit their former Habitations, and each Individual finds out his own Country, and his particular Village, City, and Nest.”

This is from the third edition of *Nature Display'd*, being “ Discourses on such Particulars of Natural History as were thought most proper to Excite the Curiosity and form the Minds of the Young.” A descriptive title forsooth !

DECEMBER SIXTH.—How the white stems of the birch shine against the blue firs with bracken, still tawny brown at its feet. In the *Paradise of Plants* I find : “The civill uses whereunto the birch-tree serveth are many ; as, for the punishment of children, both at home and at school ; for it hath an admirable influence upon them, to quiet them when they are out of order ; and therefore some call it make-peace.”

Gerard tells us that birch branches “serve well to the decking up of houses and banquetting roomes for places of pleasure, and beautifying the streetes in the crosse or gang weeke, and such like.”

Again, Turner, writing in 1551, gives the same opinion : “I have not red of any virtue the birch has in *physic*. Howbeit it serveth for many good uses, and for none better than for betynge of stubborn boys, that either lye, or will not learn.” This is delightful, and serveth well in these days to remind parents that they must not be over-fond.

Shakespeare speaks somewhat differently—

“ *Fond fathers,
Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch,
Only to stick it in their children’s sight
For terror, not to use ; in time the rod
Becomes more mock’d than feared.*”

Ah, well ! “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” Another generation will show if great lenience and love turn out heroes. I have no fear as to our future myself.

DECEMBER SEVENTH.—"The Compartiments and Borders of Parterres are taken from Geometrical Figures, as well right-lined, as circular, mixed, &c. They take various Designs into their Composition, as branch'd and flourish'd work, Palms, Foliage, Hawks - Bills, Sprigs, Tendrells, Volutes, Knots, Stalks, Ties, Chaplets; Beads, Husks, Cartoozes, Plumes, Compartiments, Frets or Interlacings, and Shell-Works of Grass, &c. Formerly they put in the Heads of Grey hounds, Griffins, and other Beasts, with their Paws and Talons; which had a very ill Effect, and made Parterres look very heavy and clouterly."

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"Seats, or Benches, besides the Conveniency they constantly afford in Great gardens, where you can scarce ever have too many, there is such need of them in walking, look very well also in a garden, when set in certain places they are destin'd to, as in the Niches or Sinkings that face principal Walks and Vistas, and in the Halls and Galleries of Groves: They are made either of Marble, Free-stone, or Wood, which last are most common; and of these there are two Kinds, the Seats with Backs to them, which are the handsomest, and are usually removed in Winter; and the plain Benches, which are fixed to their place on the Ground. You should observe to lay one Colour in Oil, either Green, or other, upon all that is exposed to the Wet in a Garden, and is subject to rot, and this not only to preserve them, but to make them look with the greater Neatness and Beauty."—*Theory and Practise of Gardening*, 1709.

DECEMBER EIGHTH.—There are many flowers in the Bible as there are many birds. More than I ever dreamed of. Flowers and trees and fruit.

Bramble.
Thistle.
Myrtle.
Elm.
Rush.
Hazel.
Barley.
Almond.
Pine.
Rose.
Mulberry.
Juniper.
Balsam.
Bulrush.
Mint.
Sycamore.
Rue.
Olive.
Aloe.
Bay Tree.
Flax.
Oak.
Wheat.
Withie.
Citron.

Melon.
Walnut.
Cucumber.
Fig Tree.
Vine.
Heath.
Ash.
Hemlock.
Onions.
Rye.
Lily.
Gourd.
Apple Tree.
Cedar.
Nettle.
Mallow.
Palm.
Garlic.
Box.
Chestnut.
Leeks.
Willow.
Poplar.
Cypress.
Desire Tree.

This is not an exhaustive list. I dare say there are many others. But it is interesting to know of these.

DECEMBER NINTH.—I have been wondering much about edgings for my flower beds, and have been consulting Parkinson on the subject. He speaks of Thrift as an edging: "This is an ever living greene herbe, which many take to border their beds, and set their knots and trayles, and therein much delight, because it will grow thicke and bushie, and may be kept, being cut with a paire of Garden sheeres, in some good handsome manner and proportion for a time, and besides, in the Summer time send forth many short stalkes of pleasant flowers, to decke up an house among other sweet herbes." I have seen Thrift as an edging in many gardens, and when covered with pink flowers is certainly very pretty. He goes on to say that "Lavender also being finely slipped and set, is of many, and those of the highest respect of late daies, accepted, both of the beauty and forme of the herbe, being of a whitish greene mealy colour, for his sent smelling somewhat strong, and being ever living and abiding greene all the Winter, will, by cutting, be kept in as even proportion as any other herbe may be." He tells us it will sometimes perish in winter, "especially if you doe not strike or put off the snow, before the Sunne lying upon it dissolve it." He speaks of course of Boxe, and goes on to tell us a "secret knowne unto a few, which is this: you shall take a Broad pointed Trow, which thrust downe right into the ground a good depth all along the inside of the border of Boxe somewhat close thereunto, you may therefore cut away the spreading roots thereof."

DECEMBER TENTH.—"I need not go about to make a large description of a *Hedge-hog*, because it is very well known; it is all over full of prickles, so that no one can touch him without pricking himself; it represents unto us the untractable *Rustick*, or wrangling *Disputants*, with whom there is no talking without a Quarrel: her neast is by Hedges and Vineyards in *Autumn*, but in *Winter* in hollow-trees; in the Summer-time she layeth up her food against Winter; she will climb fruit trees, and shake down apples, and then she taketh one in her mouth; and so rowls herself up, and sticks the rest upon her prickles, and so carryeth them to the hollow-tree where her neast is, and that is her food all the Winter."—*History of Brutes*, 1670.

"The woods how gloomy in a winter's morn!
 The crows and ravens even cease to croak,
 The little birds sit chattering on the thorn,
 The pies scarce chatter when they leave the oak.
 The quirking rabbit scarcely leaves her hole,
 But rolls in torpid slumbers all the day;
 The fox is loth to 'gin a long patrol,
 And scouts the woods, content with meaner prey;
 The hare so frisking, timid once, and gay,
 'Hind the dead thistle burkles from the view,
 Nor scarce is scar'd though in the traveller's way,
 Though waffling curs and shepherd-dogs pursue;
 So winter's rugged power affects all nature through."

—CLARE.

DECEMBER ELEVENTH.—In the Life of Tennyson I find a verse not printed in *Locksley Hall*.

*“Life is battle, let me fight it ; surely I shall win the day :
Block my paths with toil and danger, I will find or force a way.*

And after the battle

*“Lay me low,
Where the hedgeside roses blow ;
Where the little daisies grow,
Where the winds a-maying go ;
Where the footpath rustics plod ;
Where the breeze-bow'd poplars nod ;
Where the old woods worship God ;
Where His pencil paints the sod ;
Where the wedded throstle sings ;
Where the young bird tries his wings ;
Where the wailing plover swings,
Where the church-bell ever rings.”*

For the rest Browning's words are everything.

*“He who did most, shall bear most ; the strongest stand the most
weak.*

*'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for ! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead ! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee ; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever : a Hand like this hand
Shalt throw open the gates of new life to thee ! See the Christ
stand.”*

DECEMBER TWELFTH.

OLD FLOWER NAMES.

SUMMER is *so* far off. Oh! when will flowers bloom, and birds sing once more? A hopelessness creeps over one, and the only cure is to dream and write of flowers. Here is another list of flower names :—

Honesty = White-sattin, Penny-floure, Mony-floute,

Silver plate, Prick-song-wort.

Madonna Lily = Juno's Rose.

Southern-wood = Old Man.

Ragwort = Curse of Cromwell.

Dead Nettle = Archangel.

Sorrel = Alleluia, Sorrell du Bois, Wood Sower.

Loosestripe = Herb Twopence.

Orange Hawkweed = Grim the Collier.

Onion = Rest Harrow.

Mellilot = King's Clover.

White Convolvulus = Old Man's Night Cap.

Mullein = King's Candles.

Wild Hemp = Holy rope.

Storkbill = Powkneedle.

Butter-cups = Gold cups, Mary buds.

Sage. "And Sage in English, from the property in comforting, and strengthening, the Head and Memory, to make men sage and wise, of the french word *Sauge*."

"*The Poet's Rosemary*, or *Garde robe*, because it was used in Presses and Wardrobes."

"*The Garden Rosemary* is called *Rosmarinum Coronarium*, the rather because Women have been accustomed to make Crowns and Garlands thereof."

Sloe = 'Sloos or Snagges whiche is the fruite of black thornes."

DECEMBER THIRTEENTH.—“My Provençe is the Care of Flowers, and I would willingly enjoy them, thro’ all the Seasons of the year, in the Parterres, as well as in my Apartments, and all my Desserts ; and I must confess, that since I amused myself with their Cultivation, my House appears much more agreeable than it did before. I am sensible, by Experience, that gloomy Dispositions, and undelightful Ideas, are brighten’d into Gaiety and Joy, by the presence of Flowers. The Sight and Fragrance of one Jonquil, is sufficient to dissipate a melancholy Cast of Mind ; and it is hardly possible to assume an Air of Dissatisfaction, near a Cluster of Jessamine and Roses. Sadness itself disappears at the view of such Objects as these. I have distributed Flowers into every part of this Retreat, and have an infinite Pleasure in cultivating the most amiable of its Kind. This, Sir, is my Philosophy ; and though its aspect may be somewhat rustic, it never fails to amuse me, and you are sensible it is not altogether insignificant.”—*Nature Display’d*.

“TO WRITE LETTERS OF SECRETS THAT THEY MAY BE
RED WITHOUT THE DIRECTIONS FOLLOWING.

“Take fine Allum, beat it small, and put a reasonable quantity of it into water, then write with the said water. The work cannot be read, but by steeping your Paper into fair running water. You may likewise write with Vingar, or the use of Limon or Onyon ; if you would read the same, you must hold it before the fire.”—*A Queen’s Delight*, 1656.

DECEMBER FOURTEENTH.

THE CROSSBILL.

THOSE curiously interesting birds, the crossbills, sometimes come to us in small flocks at the end of autumn, and though on rare occasions a few pairs have been known to stay through the following summer and nest here, they generally all leave us when spring sets in.

They are beautiful birds, rather larger than bullfinches; the young males being brilliant crimson, and the females and old cock birds greenish yellow. Their most distinctive peculiarity lies in their bills, in which the mandibles are crossed towards the point. They feed almost entirely on the seeds of conifers, and they must therefore be looked for in those districts where pines are plentiful. The crossbills are most interesting to watch. They easily separate the scales of the fir cones with their odd bills, and with their long horn-tipped tongues extract the seeds which lie beneath. When climbing about the branches they frequently make use of their bills in the same way that parrots do, and thus hoist themselves from place to place.

A pair that I once had in an aviary were very fond of climbing up the wire sides and along the wire roof, until they were just over some perch. Here they would hang back downwards for a few seconds, and then letting go their hold, would turn in the air and alight skilfully on the perch below. This little performance they would go through by the hour at the time. The song of the crossbill is soft and low, but without much variety of note. As a rule they are noisy birds, keeping up a perpetual cry of "Chip, Chip, Chip" as they climb about the trees or fly from one to another.

DECEMBER FIFTEENTH.—I have been reading Tusser's old writing. His "Points of Husbandry," written, I think, in 1577. All his advice, to young and old, men and women, is perfectly delightful. Then I turned a page, after reading how to grow hops, and I found his "Points of Christianitie." I must copy them here, for they are a sermon in themselves.

*"To praise to God continually,
To learn to know him rightfully.
To honour God in Trinitie,
The Trinitie in Unitie.
The Father in his Majestie,
The Sonne in his humanitie,
Three Persons, one in Deitie.
To serve him alway holily,
To aske him all things needfully,
To praise him in all companie,
To love him alway hartlie,
To dread him alway christianlie,
To aske him mercie penitently,
To trust him alway faithfully,
To obey him alway willingly,
To abide him alway patientlie,
To thank him alway thankfully,
To live here alway vertuously,
To use thy neighbour honestly,
To look for death still presently,
To help the poore in miserie,
To hope for heaven's felicitie,
To have faith, hope and charity,
To count this life but vanitie:
Be points of Christianitie."*

DECEMBER SIXTEENTH.—I can only dream of an ideal garden to-day, where

*“The Snowdrop and then the violet
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.*

*Then the pied wind-flowers, and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream’s recess
Till they die of their own dear loveliness.*

*And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair, and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green.*

*And the hyacinth, purple and white and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense.*

*And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Menad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through the clear dew on the tender sky.*

*And the jasmine faint, and the sweet tube rose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows ;
And all rare blossoms from every clime,
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.”*

—SHELLEY.

DECEMBER SEVENTEENTH.—Walking this morning by the shrubbery, I was surprised to see a number of moorhens. Their perky little white tails flashed like the scuts of tiny rabbits as they ran in and out among the bushes, under whose covering they sought the shelter and food which the frozen ponds across the meadow no longer gave them. These birds, not being web-footed, are very active on land, and especially in the evening may be seen in numbers running about the field. The wonder is, not that they should be such good runners, but that they should be such expert swimmers; they dive, too, in a moment when alarmed.

The nests of these birds are large untidy structures, generally placed a few inches above the water, either in reeds or in the branch of some bush which dips into, or overhangs, the pond or stream, and here as many as eight or nine eggs are laid. Sometimes, however, I have found the nest placed many feet from the ground, in some bush or small tree near the water's edge, and then, when the baby moorhens are hatched, they have to be brought down to the water on their mother's back. The young take to the water naturally the moment they leave their shell, and from the very first are as expert as their parents in the art of diving. Like little black balls of hair they disappear when alarmed, and only a very careful search will enable one to perceive the tiny bill protruding from the water in order that the chick may breathe, while the rest of the body is submerged or concealed beneath the leaf of some water plant.

DECEMBER EIGHTEENTH.—“The Festivals in the Country, are never celebrated without Garlands ; and the Entertainments of the Polite are usher'd in by a Flower.”
—*Nature Display'd*, 1736.

“Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude ;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh, ho ! sing, heigh, ho ! under the green holly :
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly :
Then, heigh, ho ! the holly !
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot :
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp,
As friend remember'd not.
Heigh, ho ! sing, heigh, ho ! under the green holly :
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly :
Then, heigh, ho ! the holly !
This life is most jolly.”

—SHAKESPEARE.

There is always something bracing about Shakespeare. One is glad to turn to him after a surfeit of “Flowers and showers,” and “Doves and loves.” It is a pity we do not study him more and Shelley less and so strengthen our minds.

DECEMBER NINETEETH.—I am interested in the names given to parts of a garden in the olden days. How prosaic we are now, to be sure! “There are divers sorts of Parterres, namely Parterres of Embroidery, Parterres of Compartment, Parterres after the *English Manner*, and Parterres of Cut-Work.” Again, names of Walks. “The Parallel-walk, the Strait-walk, the Cross-walk, the Winding or Circular walk, the walk returned square, and the Diagonal or Thwart-walk, in respect of that at Right Angles.” There were steps of grass laid in Zic-Zac, and in every garden there were Alleys, and Counter-Alleys. Also we read of a *Theatre of Flowers*, which consisted “of several Ranks, or steps of wood, ascending one behind another, by which means, the Eye, as well as the Hand, may be extended to all Parts, without Impediment.” In the same garden there was a *Pyramid of Flowers*. Of course there were groves, and a maze, and a fine Olitory or Kitchen Garden. John Evelyn in his *Silva* explains many of the old words for us. He tells us that a *Quincunx* means “trees set like the cinque-point of a dye.” That a *parterre* “is a flower garden, or knots.” *Topiary Works*, “the clipping, cutting, and forming of hedges, &c., into figures and works.” A *Palisade* “is a pole-hedge.” A Coronary Garden is also a flower garden. An Arborator is a pruner; *Tonsile*, “that which may be shorne or clipped.”

Verily old words are prettier than modern ones.

DECEMBER TWENTIETH.—What say you, Perilla, to the following passage I have come to to-day in my search for flower-lore? Methinks I have made a goodly collection for you :—

“There is no part of Nature’s works more interesting than flowers. They seem intended for the embellishment of our fair, and for the ornament of the spot where they tread. Their sweet perfumes have such influence over all our sensations, that in the midst of flowering shrubs the most acute grief generally gives way to the sweetest melancholy. When our home and domestic companions are encompassed by the shrubbery, our situation then approaches nearest to a terrestrial paradise.”—*Sylva Florifera*.

See you? You are bound to have a garden after all. “For flowers are intended for the embellishment of our fair.” Do not flout the thought, sweetheart. I have tried this recipe for a terrestrial paradise and have proved it good. “Man, by nature, inherits the love of flowers. The domains of the noble, and the cottage of the humble, alike proclaim to us the dominion of the passion.”—MAUND.

There again I have another proof for you. But, Perilla, I pray of you to be serious for a moment, and with me love the following lines :—

“Not a tree,
A plant, a leaf, a blossom, but contains
A folio volume. We may read and read,
And read again, and still find something new,
Something to please, and something to instruct.”

—HURDIS.

DECEMBER TWENTY-FIRST.—ST. THOMAS' DAY.

I HAVE just read in an old book (1794) that “going a *gooding* on St. Thomas' Day formerly prevailed in England. Women begged money, and in return presented the donors with sprigs of palm and branches of primroses.” How *could* they find palm and primroses on St. Thomas' Day? and did primroses grow in branches in olden days? If we go “*gooding*” we must carry Christmas Roses and branches of fir.

“*St. Thomas Gray, St. Thomas Gray,
The longest night and shortest day.*”

“If it freezes on the shortest day of the year, the price of corn will fall; if it be mild weather, it will go up.”

“Look at the weather cock on St. Thomas's day at 12 o'clock, and see which way the wind is; there it will stick for the next three months.”

“The species of nocturnal street music commonly called the Waits, or more properly Wakes, commonly begins on this day, and continues till Christmas; so that at this dreary season we are serenaded during the night by the music of fiddles, hautbois, clarionets, flutes, French horns, lyres, lutes, and other instruments—the effect of which, when they first awake us from our slumbers, is very pleasing and fanciful. This custom originated evidently in commemoration of the early salutation of the Virgin Mary before the birth of Christ, or the *Gloria in excelsis*, the hymn of the angels.”—*Foster's Calendar*.

DECEMBER TWENTY-SECOND.

*“ Out of the bosom of the air,
Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,
Over the woodlands brown and bare,
Over the harvest fields forsaken,
Silent, and soft, and slow
Descends the snow.*

*Even as our cloudy fancies take
Suddenly shape in some divine expression,
Even as the troubled heart doth make
In the white countenance confession,
The troubled sky reveals
The grief it feels.*

*This is the poem of the air,
Slowly in silent syllables recorded;
This is the secret of despair,
Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded,
Now whispered and revealed
To wood and field.”*

—LONGFELLOW.

*“ E’en Winter oft has seen it gay,
With fretted frost-work spangled o’er,
While pendants drooped from every spray,
And crimson budlets told, once more,
That Spring would all its charms restore.”*

DECEMBER TWENTY-THIRD.

MONICA, BELOVED,—I don't agree with you at all, I never did, and I hope I never shall. Fancy your liking old books better than new. You must be hard up for amusement indeed. As the day was dark and cold and dreary, and all the men had gone out shooting, I strayed into the library, and to please you I took down an old garden book. I said to myself I will find quotations for Monica, all about birds and flowers. I opened a book at random, written by some old fossil in 1700 and something, and this is what I found : "Nothing is more unusual than to meet with People who think and reflect." At any rate, *that* will please you. A lady replies, "We Women are discouraged from that Care, and it seems the Men do not usually expect Thought from us. Among them, a little shining Liveliness supplies us with every necessary Accomplishment." Oh ! fie, Monica, and this is what I am to learn from your dear old garden books ! I expected to find beautiful, soothing, old flower names, such as "Jack-in-the-pulpit," "Call-me-quick-and-cuddle-me," "Widdowe-Waile," and such poetical fancies. Not a bit of it. Let me read on. "Men, by the Conduct they observe with respect to us, labour to form in our Minds all those Imperfections for which they reproach us." Thank Heaven, we have one thing in common with the dames of olden days, we lay all the blame on the men ! Bless them, "A little shining Liveliness" is about all they do want, and you would add "The Culture of Flowers." I have soiled my hands with dust, and read many pages, and am not one bit impressed. In fact, modern books are best—there is so very little in them. Moral reflections bore me. I blush even now when I think of passages I read in what you are pleased to call a *Herbal*.—Yours for ever and ever,

CORINNA.

DECEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH.—"Now capons and hens, besides turkeys, geese, ducks, with beef and mutton, must all die; for in twelve days a multitude of people will not be fed with a little. Now plums and spice, sugar and honey, square it among pies and broth. Now a journeyman cares not a rush for his master, though he begs his plum-porridge all the twelve days. Now or never must the music be in tune, for the youth must dance and sing to get them a heat, while the aged sit by the fire. The country maid leaves half her market, and must be sent again if she forgets a pack of cards on Christmas Eve. Great is the contention of holly and ivy, whether master or dame wears the breeches; and if the cook do not lack wit, he will sweetly like his fingers."—STEVENSON'S *Twelve Months*, 1661.

*"Come bring, with a noise,
My merrie, merrie boys,
The Christmas Log to the firing;
While my good dame she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.*

*With the last year's Brand
Light the new Block, and
For good successe in his spending,
On your psalters play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the Log is a treending."*

—HERRICK.

DECEMBER TWENTY-FIFTH.—CHRISTMAS DAY.

THIS is the children's day. The day when the maiden, longing to lay flowers at the feet of the Child Christ, stood empty handed till an angel, seeing her still lingering there, filled them with Christmas roses.

*"The Christmas rose, the last flower of the year,
That comes when holly berries glow and cheer."*

Here I must note, what is said by some one to be the most perfect allegory in the language :—

*"I gave to Hope a watch of mine, and he
An anchor gave to me,
With that an old prayer-book I did present,
And he an optic lent.
With that I gave a vial full of tears,
And he a few green ears.
Ah ! Loiterer ! I'll no more, no more I bring,
I did expect a ring."*

Let every one interpret these lines for themselves.

Oh, the memories of childhood which this day brings to us ! A day so full of love and joy and kindness. The chairs are empty now but the love is still there, everlasting, and true as ever. But we miss the presence, and all we can do is to lose ourselves, in our turn, in the joy of the children.

DECEMBER TWENTY-SIXTH.—ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

THIS is the day when

*“The little wrenne,
Our Lady's henne”*

suffers in Ireland. This is the day when “the village children carry about an ivy-bush, decked with coloured ribbons, among which the slaughtered birds are hung”! The supposed origin of this ancient practice of killing dear little Jenny Wrens on St. Stephen's Day is the following: After the last battle between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Donegal, Aubrey tells us, “Near the same place a party of the Protestants had been surprised sleeping, by the Popish Irish, were it not for several wrens, that just wakened them, by dancing and pecking on the drums, as the enemy was approaching. For this reason the wild Irish mortally hate them to this day, and killing them whenever they can catch them, they teach their children to thrust them full of thorns; you'll see sometimes on holidays a whole parish running like madmen from hedge to hedge a wren-hunting.” Poor little Cutty, how dreadfully cruel it is to persecute you! The common wren is often called “The little King”; why, I know not, for it is such a small bird.

The foolish old Irish song which the children sing when they collect pennies on this day runs:—

*“The wran, the wran, the king of all birds,
St. Stephen's Day was cot in the furze,
Although he is little, his family's grate,
Put your hand in your pocket and give us a thrate.”*

We have a wren which builds every year in the ivy over our front door.

DECEMBER TWENTY-SEVENTH. — With our growing knowledge of flowers we ought to make out a Dial of Flowers, or as Linnæus calls it, “A Watch of Flora.” So many flowers open and shut at the same hour. “Linnæus tells us there are forty-six flowers which possess this kind of sensibility. He divides them first into *meteoric* flowers, which less accurately observe the hour of unfolding, but are expanded sooner or later, according to the cloudiness, moisture, or pressure of the atmosphere. *Tropical* flowers open in the morning and close before evening every day; but the hour of expanding becomes earlier or later, as the light of the day increases or decreases. *Æquinoctial* flowers, which open at a certain and exact hour of the day, and for the most part close at another determinate hour.”—DARWIN.

Here are some of the flowers: “Four o’clock flower,” the Marvel of Peru, opens at four. Goat-beard opens at three, and goes to bed at five. Mouse-ear hawk-weed opens at eight, closes at two. Convolvulus at five to six. Field Marigold, nine to three. The blue flower Sow thistle wakes at five and sleeps at twelve. I will not write further names down, we must each make our own flower-clock.

“’Twas a lovely thought to mark the hours,
As they floated in light away,
By the opening and the folding flowers,
That laugh to the Summer’s day.

Yet is not life in its real flight,
Marked thus, even thus, on earth,
By the closing of one hope’s delight,
And another’s gentle birth.”

—MRS. HEMANS.

DECEMBER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

HOLY INNOCENTS' DAY.—CHILDERMAS DAY.

THERE is an old proverb which says, "Two Robins cannot live in one bush." In a *Journal of a Naturalist* (1830) we read that the robin might be called pugnacious, jealous, selfish, quarrelsome, did we not respect ancient feelings and long-established sentiments. "Yet it has some little coaxing ways, and such fearless confidence, that it wins our regard; and its late autumnal song, in evening's dusky hour, or a monologue, is pleasing, and redeems much of its character." In *Our Native Songsters* I find that "everywhere some pet name is bestowed on the household bird. Thus our Robin, or Bob, or Ruddock, is in some parts of Sweden called Tommy Liden; in Norway, Peter Ronsmed; in Germany, Thomas Gierdet."

Wordsworth writes—

*"Art thou the bird whom man loves best,
 The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
 Our little English Robin;
 The bird that comes about our doors
 When autumn winds are sobbing?
 Art thou the Peter of Norway boors?
 Their Thomas in Finland
 And Russia far inland?
 The bird that by some name or other
 All men who know thee call brother."*

I heard the story of a robin, once, which sang one day in church at the close of evensong perched on the corner of the organ. The following day it was found dead at the foot of the cross on the altar. Fit subject for a poet's pen.

DECEMBER TWENTY-NINTH.—“I persuade my self, that the bountiful and Gracious Author of Man’s Being and Faculties, and all things else, delights in the Beauty of His Creation, and is well pleased with the Industry of Man, in adorning the Earth with beautiful Cities and Castles, with pleasant Villages and Country-Houses, with regular Gardens, and Orchards, and plantations of all sorts of Shrubs, or Herbs, and Fruits, for Meat, Medicine, or moderate Delight, with shady Woods and Groves, and Walks set with Rows of elegant Trees; *with Pastures clothed with Flocks, and Valleys covered with Corn, and Meadows burthened with Grass, and whatever else differenceth a civil and well cultivated Region, from a barren and desolate Wilderness.*”—JOHN RAY, *The Wisdom of God in the Creation.*

“If it is true that all Creatures testify of the Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth, certainly the Testimony of *Plants* is none of the least considerable, since they represent to us the unsearchable Wisdom and Power of God, as clearly as any others of his Creatures. And I am persuaded, that tho’ a Man should attain the Age of *Methusalem*, and pass his whole Life in nothing but Speculations on *Plants*, he would not be capable of acquiring a perfect knowledge of their Natures, Virtues, and wonderful Qualities.”—*A Philosophical Treatise of Husbandry and Gardening.*

DECEMBER THIRTIETH.

*“ And yet could I live it over,
This life that stirs in my brain,
Could I be both maiden and lover,
Noon and tide, bee and clover,
As I seem to have been, once again,
Could I but speak it and show it,
This pleasure more sharp than pain,
That baffles and lures me so,
The world should once more have a poet,
Such as it had
In the ages glad,
Long ago ! ”*

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

*“ ’Tis a dull sight
To see the year dying,
When winter winds
See the yellow wood sighing :
Sighing, oh ! sighing.”*

Ah ! welladay, the sand is nearly run out. Will the year be marked for good or for ill in the Book of Time ? Have I done my best ? Wist ye that nought matters if we have done right and kept straight ahead ? And the year that is coming, what does it hold for me ? It matters not, all will be well, and one step is enough at a time. There will be strength enough for the one day whatever happens. Life is a difficult thing to understand ; but then there is no need to understand here, if we only trust.

DECEMBER THIRTY-FIRST.—So I have turned the last page in my Kalendar ! I am sorry the task is finished, I am sorry the year is gone !

“ Watch out thy watch, let weak ones doze and dream.”

Yet one requires courage to face the new year bravely. To live nobly and to live well is within the reach of all of us, with a higher ideal ever beyond our grasp.

“ The utmost for the highest.”

“ Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long.”

To do our best day by day, and without looking forward. If we worried less and prayed more life would be easier ; love would take the place of duty, and above all self would be forgotten.

*“ The colour that glanced and glowed in the heart of the hills of
dream,
The light that dazzled and drew, in the year that is on the
wane,
The song with the moan of the wind and the whirr of the moorland
stream,
They are still in a realm unreached, so we turn to the quest
again.*

*Bring us new hopes, New Year ; kindle fresh pharos-fires,
But whatsoever thou bring this boon of thy grace afford,
That in twelve moons' time we may still be afar from our dream-
desires ;
For never the thing attained is the thing we have toiled toward.”*

LIST OF PRINCIPAL AUTHORS QUOTED

ADDISON, J., 134
Agricola, Dr., 66, 339, 347
Aristotle, 108
Arnold, Matthew, 91

BACON, Francis, 34, 43, 55, 61, 91,
152, 215, 224, 244, 274, 280, 336
Barton, Bernard, 167
Batterson, Dr., 37
Bidlake, 108
Blake, William, 224, 247, 249
Britten, J., 239
Brown, Frances, 287
Brown, Sir Thomas, 187
Browning, E. B., 63, 134
Browning, Robert, 72, 77, 92, 133,
147, 305, 314, 345
Burns, Robert, 137, 143

CAREW, 240
Chaucer, 53, 180
Cicero, 262
Clare, 30, 78, 98, 101, 128, 161,
165, 188, 195, 209, 220, 230,
331, 344
Cole, William, 54, 126, 291, 293,
303, 306, 320, 322
Cornwall, Barry, 175
Cowper, W., 52, 202, 264
Culpepper, 4, 16, 27, 54, 58, 187,
243, 291, 311

DARWIN, Charles, 44
Darwin, Erasmus, 262, 281, 313
Drayton, Michael, 149, 205, 246,
273, 301, 316
Dufferin, Helen, Lady, 277

EMERSON, R. W., 211, 229, 247,
327

FOSTER, Dr., 15, 22, 127, 217, 355

GASCOIGNE, George, 115, 116, 118,
159, 272
Gay, John, 45, 156, 296
Gerarde, John, 35, 40, 58, 59, 75,
94, 99, 102, 170, 203, 213
Grahame, 51, 87

HEBER, Bishop, 282
Hemans, Mrs., 124, 286, 361
Hurdis, 354
Herbert, George, 63
Herrick, Robert, 7, 32, 33, 81, 107,
114, 121, 151, 242, 257, 307, 320,
358
Hinton, 191
Hone, William, 207
Hood, Tom, 70, 74, 226, 276, 299,
314
Hunt, Leigh, 200

368 LIST OF PRINCIPAL AUTHORS

JONSON, Ben, 20, 139

Joubert, 286

KEATS, John, 110, 145, 171, 202,
251, 267, 270, 316

Kemble, Frances, 231

Kingsley, Charles, 47, 302

LIGNE, Prince de, 290

Longfellow, H. W., 117, 130, 310,
356

Lowell, James Russell, 9, 13, 49,
153, 237, 364

Lyte, Henry, 4, 41, 163, 228, 291

MASON, William, 137, 223, 250

Maund, 73, 252, 354

Mant, Bishop, 94

Milton, John, 121, 124, 221, 316

Morris, William, 248

NOEL, Hon. Roden, 212

PARKINSON, 30, 94, 96, 102, 120,
150, 190, 257, 261, 262, 322, 337

Pearce, Lilian, 1, 119, 144

Peele, G., 135

QUINTINGE, M. De la, 2, 34, 61,
91, 338

RAPIN, 62, 96, 102, 105, 106, 109,
163, 168, 264, 289, 293, 302, 336

Ray, John, 86, 163, 363

Rossetti, Christina, 4, 90

Ruskin, John, 95, 223

SCOTT, Walter, 76, 105

Shakespeare, William, 22, 83, 95,
103, 110, 169, 175, 279, 340, 352

Shelley, P., 23, 50, 169, 204, 277,
350

Skelton, John, 263

Smith, Charlotte, 208

Southey, Robert, 323

Spenser, Edmund, 76, 90, 121, 215,
234

TAYLOR, Jeremy, 191

Tennyson, Alfred, 48, 51, 137, 149,
167, 184, 287, 292, 335, 345

Thomson, James, 129, 131, 286

Turner, William, 31

Tusser, Thomas, 25, 65, 82, 92,
196, 260, 291, 349

WALPOLE, Horace, 256, 330

Walton, Izaak, 149

Watson, Forbes, 21, 59, 109, 253,
290, 326

White, Gilbert, 23, 30, 71, 106,
239

Wordsworth, W., 41, 67, 68, 116,
142, 145, 154, 157, 169, 193, 210,
243, 284, 362

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